





# CHARACTER TRAINING

*A Program for the Home*

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## PREFACE

How can I train my children to be industrious? How can I help my children to control their tempers? These, and similar questions are being asked daily by perplexed parents.

One of the most hopeful signs of today is the present widespread interest in the character training of children. Never in the history of mankind has the child, his nature, and his needs, been so universally and scientifically studied. During the past decade, the results of several scientific investigations pertinent to the study and solution of certain problems of character training have been published. These data with their suggested scientific methods of study are a distinct contribution to the problem of character education.

(There is need for carefully outlined programs in character training based upon the results of scientific investigations. Such programs ought to render no little service to both parents and teachers in their common problem—character building.)

The succeeding chapters are devoted to a discussion of an investigation in character training which extended over a period of three years. Five thousand four hundred sixty-three parents in sixteen cities and thirty-one rural communities cooperated with the teachers and the authors in this study. One of the outstanding purposes of this investigation was to develop a character training program for the home and the school which was at once remedial and preventive. The program in its final form is presented in the three sections of this book.

Thus, in Section I of this study the method of initiating a cooperative character education program is described. The two successful plans used in discovering the most common maladjustments of children as the parents saw them are presented in full.

In Section II the probable causes and origin of these various maladjustments, and the fundamental psychological principles

which must be observed in their rectification are discussed. The necessity of providing the child with a wholesome, stimulating environment which affords him legitimate outlets and interests for his impulsive urges, and which gives him many opportunities for successful participation in the activities of his social group, is emphasized by many illustrations.

Section III is concerned chiefly with the problem of habituating certain desirable character traits. The psychological laws involved in habit formation are discussed and illustrated. How the home can institute a program of living which will give the children much practice in developing good habits constitutes the substance of this section.

The book has been organized with the leader of parent study groups in mind. Not only are certain crucial problems of child training discussed but at the close of several chapters many questions are listed which have been found to be of incalculable value in conducting parent study meetings.

It is believed that the parents and teachers taking part in this investigation have, through their cooperative endeavors, made at least three contributions: (1) The typical undesirable traits of children at the different age levels have been ascertained. (2) The probable causes of these undesirable traits have been discussed and a remedial program for their rectification has been outlined. (3) A program of democratic living for the home which will tend to develop stability of character and the balanced personality has been outlined and illustrated.

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## SECTION I

HOW WILL A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM INVOLVING  
BOTH THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL INSURE  
CHARACTER GROWTH?



## CHAPTER I

### THE HOME AS A FACTOR IN CHILD TRAINING

Parents are teachers. They are the first and most influential teachers that the child has. Whether the child becomes physically strong, intellectually developed, and emotionally balanced depends largely upon the parents' sympathy for and understanding of child life. The idea that parenthood brings with it sufficient knowledge of child nature to insure wholesome physical, intellectual, and emotional development is no longer tenable. Parenthood not only brings life's greatest opportunity—the child—but also life's greatest obligation—thorough preparation for the rearing of the child.

#### WHAT ARE TWO GREAT NEEDS OF PARENTS?

Success in the fulfillment of the obligation of parents requires (1) knowledge of child nature, and (2) appreciation of the influence of environment upon the child's life. These needs are daily in evidence about us.

If, after pouting and sulking for a few hours, an adolescent girl is granted her way, she is learning to pout and sulk whenever her wishes are thwarted. If a mother yields to her baby's caprices after he has cried and screamed for a quarter of an hour, she is teaching him to cry and scream for whatever he wants. If a father does all the thinking for his son, shielding him from every hard conflict, he is doing all he can to develop a weakling instead of a man of poise and promise. If a boy is petted and babied and is allowed to stay out of school every time he says he has a stomach ache or a dizzy spell, he is learning to have aches and spells. If a little girl is denied her favorite doll until she throws herself into a tantrum, she is being taught the value of tantrums. Children soon learn what kinds of behavior yield the desired results. If, in the above cases, there were no yielding nor compromising upon the part of the parents until

after the child had exhibited self-control and a respectful manner, then self-control and politeness would be speedily developed.

When a fretful mother, in her child's presence, tells her neighbor that "she simply can't trust Bobbie out of her sight," she is helping Bobbie become the neighborhood's untrustworthy *harum-scarum*. When a child fails in his arithmetic at school and is repeatedly told at home that he will likely always fail because his father never could get numbers, the home is doing its best to insure a failing, fearing complex for all "number" situations in that child's life. When a boy is told continually that he is the worst young 'un in the district, he will try to retain his self-respect by living up to his reputation. Parents too often forget how plastic and impressionable is the child's nervous system. Children will believe anything, if it is told frequently and intensely enough. Their credulity is their undoing.

Some reasons why parents should appreciate more acutely the force of environment upon child life are authoritatively set forth by Dr. Thom:

The home represents the workshop in which these personalities are being developed, and the mental atmosphere of the home can be very easily contaminated. The ever-changing moods of the parents, colored by their indifference, their quarrels, depressions, and resentments, and shown by their manner of speech and action, are decidedly unhealthy; so, too, are the timidity of a mother, the arrogance of a father, the self-consciousness of a younger sister, and the egotism of an older brother. Under such conditions we find a mental atmosphere as dangerous to the child as if it were contaminated by scarlet fever, diphtheria, or typhoid. On the other hand, cheerfulness, affection, kindly consideration, cleanliness, a manner and speech that are not forbidding but show interest in the questions of the child, frankness and honesty in answering questions with the idea of developing freedom in speech and action not inhibited by fear of punishment or silent contempt—all these things play a part in the development of the personality of the child that cannot be overestimated. The environment is found to be mirrored in the character of the child, regardless of what his heredity may be.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas A. Thom, M. D. "The Nervous Child and the Habit Clinic," *Mental Health Primer* (National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1926), pp. 22-3.



## HOW SIGNIFICANT IS HOME LIFE TO THE CHILD AND HIS FUTURE?

Every year 75,000 adults are sent to the insane asylums of the United States. Psychiatrists assert that these nervous breakdowns had their origin for the most part in childhood. Had parents and teachers observed and understood the mental conflicts which these unfortunates were experiencing when children, the majority of the cases could have been prevented.

It is estimated that every year 300,000 men and women are sent to penitentiaries and other penal institutions in the United States. It is the unanimous verdict of judges, physicians, and psychiatrists that this vast army of derelicts could be greatly reduced were children given proper training in the home.

Fortunately, the majority of the readers of these chapters are personally concerned, not with the mental and moral derelicts alluded to but with the so-called "normal" boys and girls in their own homes. The paramount question is, "How can we develop emotional self-control in our children now so that in the next generation there will not be millions of them made unhappy daily because of their lack of control or that of others?" For it is only too true that daily hundreds are made miserable by the cutting and cruel things said and done by those who have never learned complete self-control. The mental bitterness and anguish resulting from such uncontrollable emotional outbursts need never have been, had the childhood of these transgressors been one of peace, poise, balance, tolerance, and sympathy. It is with the millions who are and will continue to be made sick mentally and physically because of emotional instability that we, as parents and teachers, are daily concerned.

If it is true that defects in the character make-up can be explained as originating in traits which were acquired in early childhood as reactions to certain factors in the child's environment, then the way is opened for an attempt to prevent such undesirable traits by an *understanding of the child* and a modification or elimination of those *environmental* factors which produce such results.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William A. White, M. D., "Childhood: The Golden Period for Mental Hygiene," *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. IV, 1920, pp. 257-267.

### WHY IS THE HOME THE MOST IMPORTANT INSTITUTION IN CHARACTER BUILDING?

No other institution can do so much to shape human destiny for good as the home, for the following reasons:

1. The first five or six years of a child's life are the most impressionable. It is in these years that many of the primary emotionalized attitudes and reactions are formed for life.
2. These early years find the child almost entirely under the influence of the parents. Here are both a golden opportunity and a great obligation to lay a flawless, adamant foundation for happy, progressive maturity.
3. Love for father and mother surpasses all other love. The child's confidence in his parents is unbounded. Their deeds, words, and emotional responses are imitated in ways that are startling.
4. Approximately 184,000 hours are lived between the age of infancy and legal maturity. But on an average only 7,000 of these hours are spent in school. Since child life is the most sensitive and plastic of all life and since it is lived for the most part either directly or indirectly within the home environment, the child cannot be other than a reflex of this home environment.
5. In a very significant sense parenthood is a second chance at childhood. Nature, in all her affluence, could scarcely have provided a plan more just in which adults could re-live their childhood as they wish it might have been lived. For if these parents, when children, were reared in an environment which fostered the learning of pernicious habits and unhealthy emotionalized attitudes, what an opportunity is afforded these same parents now to save their children from the same handicaps by setting up a wholesome environment. Thus each generation could be infinitely happier and richer than the preceding, if parents could but envisage the significance of their opportunities.

Many parents fail to realize that their greatest opportunity for permanent happiness and for self-realization lies in the wisdom with which they nourish and cherish their re-created selves in the lives of their children. What achievements, what joys are comparable to those experienced by the parent who, in his own lifetime, sees the embodiment of all that he had wished for but somehow failed to be, growing stronger and sturdier in the children in his home?

#### WITH WHAT INSTITUTION CAN THE HOME COOPERATE BEST?

No other institutions can cooperate so effectively in the education of children as the home and the school. In the degree that they work earnestly and intelligently together upon any program of personality enrichment and character development, will success be assured. That the home and the school are the two most potent agencies for helping or hurting young life is evident. They have under their direct guardianship and influence *all* youth in the years of its greatest sensitivity and plasticity. Both are interested primarily in child training and are set apart for the business of helping the child achieve his maximum growth mentally, morally, and emotionally. Both are daily and directly aware of many undesirable habits and faults of children that must be corrected; and they alone can provide a program of living which will insure the replacement of bad habits with good habits.

The school and the home share in having the world's most interesting and perplexing laboratories, in which they may carefully study and experiment. They have the obligation and the opportunity to read, discuss, and work out together environmental conditions in the home and school which will supplement one another in helping boys and girls become habituated in making wholesome adjustments to their numerous daily baffling problems. In the degree that these two agencies accept their responsibility and cooperate in the great work of child training, will the lives of the boys and girls be effective, wholesome, and happy.

The whole aim of the following chapters of this book is to

stimulate parents and teachers to realize the significance of the possibilities of childhood and to suggest to them cooperative means for the realization of their common aspiration.

#### CONCLUSION

1. If parents want their children to go in the right direction, it is imperative that they go that way themselves—at least a part of the time.
2. The two greatest needs of parents and teachers are:
  - (a) Deeper understanding of child nature.
  - (b) Greater comprehension of the influence of environment upon child nature.
3. The home is the workshop in which character is built.
4. Escape from the blemishes or blessings of one's early home training is practically impossible.
5. The influence of the parent upon the plastic child is infinite, making for stability or weakness of character.
6. The great hope of any age is the child. The realization of the potentialities of this hope is almost entirely in the hands of parents and teachers.
7. The most imperative command of civilization ought to be that the guardians of her children cooperate in providing a wholesome daily environment.



## CHAPTER II

### A STUDY OF THE UNDESIRABLE HABITS OF CHILDREN

Upon what specific child problems can the home and the school work most advantageously? It is evident that both are tremendously interested in the two following questions: (1) How can we *prevent* the formation of undesirable habits, and (2) How can we *cure* or *rectify* wrong habits already formed?

Before an intelligent, concerted attack can be made upon either problem, much accurate data must be gathered. In short, the first big cooperative project of parents and teachers is to ascertain the outstanding faults or undesirable habits of children. Then can be instituted a remedial program of living which will effect a *cure* of these cases of maladjustment. Otherwise, certain pernicious habits already formed may counteract the effectiveness of any preventive program of character building.

#### HOW MAY THE UNDESIRABLE TYPES OF BEHAVIOR BE DETERMINED?

There are several methods that might be employed in finding the most common faults of children. One might ask the teachers, neighbors, or parents to list them. Parents cooperated in the investigation, the results of which are reported in this chapter. On pages 10-12 is a list of 132 faults, compiled from questionnaires filled out by parents at the time they were taking an extension course in character education.

This extension course, consisting of eight lectures, was given in six different cities of Missouri. For the most part, members of the class were also members of the local parent-teacher association. In the first lecture the instructor pointed out how necessary it was, if there was to be an intelligent assignment of directed readings and pivotal points for future discussion, that both the

group and he know what were the most acute and troublesome problems of the parents in training their children. The parents were then given a questionnaire with the two following questions and illustrative, hypothetical answers:

1. What specific virtues or habits need strengthening most in your child or children? (For example, "Keeping his room tidy.")
2. What are some of the undesirable habits or specific faults of your child or children that seem most difficult to correct? (For example, "Slowness in dressing.")

The questions were answered while the interest was intense. No names were to appear on the papers. At the close of this session, the papers were collected. For the next meeting, the following week, the answers were tabulated upon a large piece of cardboard so that all could see. These data now became the focal points for discussion.

Over 650 mothers cooperated in this phase of the investigation. The answers to the first question, "What virtues in your child need strengthening?" were few and vague. But in nearly every instance the second question, "What faults has your child?" was answered definitely and generously. It was evident to the authors, after much experimenting, that parents can readily see the faults of their children and are desirous of studying ways of rectifying them. It was equally apparent that putting the question positively, asking what virtues needed strengthening, did not arouse much interest.

The list of 132 faults or undesirable types of conduct of children is given in the exact terminology of the parents as found in the 650 questionnaires turned in to the instructors:

- |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Argues              | 9. Boisterous                    |
| 2. Automobile problem  | 10. Bossy                        |
| 3. Bad loser           | 11. "Boy crazy"                  |
| 4. Bad table manners   | 12. Bullying                     |
| 5. Bad temper          | 13. Careless                     |
| 6. Biting finger nails | 14. Conceited                    |
| 7. Blaming others      | 15. Contradicts parents          |
| 8. Boasting            | 16. Chewing gum in <u>public</u> |

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 17. Cowardly                   | 60. Lack of imagination           |
| 18. Cruelty to pets            | 61. Lack of initiative            |
| 19. Dawdles over food          | 62. Lack of self-control          |
| 20. Demands attention          | 63. Lack of self-confidence       |
| 21. Deceitful                  | 64. Lack of respect               |
| 22. Dependent                  | 65. Lack of "stick-to-it-iveness" |
| 23. Destructive                | 66. Lack of will power            |
| 24. Discontented               | 67. Lazy                          |
| 25. Dishonest                  | 68. Meddlesome                    |
| 26. Disregard for advice       | 69. Misbehavior before company    |
| 27. Disobedient                | 70. Mischievous                   |
| 28. Disrespectful              | 71. Nervous                       |
| 29. Dissatisfied               | 72. Not cleanly                   |
| 30. Easily influenced          | 73. Not fair                      |
| 31. Egotistic                  | 74. Not friendly                  |
| 32. Envious                    | 75. Not loyal                     |
| 33. Excitable                  | 76. Not punctual                  |
| 34. Extravagant                | 77. Not thorough                  |
| 35. Fault finding              | 78. Not truthful                  |
| 36. Fear of the dark           | 79. Over-cautious                 |
| 37. Forward                    | 80. Over-confident                |
| 38. "Girl crazy"               | 81. Overworked imagination        |
| 39. Greedy                     | 82. Poor sport                    |
| 40. Hates to go to bed         | 83. Pouts                         |
| 41. Impatient                  | 84. Procrastinates                |
| 42. Impudent                   | 85. Peevish                       |
| 43. Impolite                   | 86. Quarrelsome                   |
| 44. Impulsive                  | 87. Resentful of correction       |
| 45. Inattentive                | 88. Refuses to take naps          |
| 46. Inconsiderate              | 89. Restless                      |
| 47. Indifference to money      | 90. Rough                         |
| 48. Indifference to punishment | 91. Rude                          |
| 49. Indifference to toys       | 92. Running away                  |
| 50. Interest in bad food       | 93. Self-assertive                |
| 51. Interrupts                 | 94. Self-conscious                |
| 52. Interferes                 | 95. Self-centered                 |
| 53. Irresponsible              | 96. Selfish                       |
| 54. Irritable                  | 97. Self-pitying                  |
| 55. Jealous                    | 98. Self-satisfied                |
| 56. Lack of concentration      | 99. Showing off                   |
| 57. Lack of consideration      | 100. Slow in dressing             |
| 58. Lack of cooperation        |                                   |
| 59. Lack of foresight          |                                   |

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 101. Slow to obey          | 117. Thumb sucking     |
| 102. Slow to act           | 118. Timid             |
| 103. Sly                   | 119. Too much reading  |
| 104. "Smarty"              | 120. Unforgiving       |
| 105. Stays up late         | 121. Ungrateful        |
| 106. A "steady"            | 122. Unkind            |
| 107. Stingy                | 123. Use of slang      |
| 108. Stubborn              | 124. Unsympathetic     |
| 109. Sullen                | 125. Untidy with books |
| 110. Supersensitive        | 126. Untidy with dress |
| 111. Taking advantage      | 127. Untidy with room  |
| 112. Talks too much        | 128. Untidy at table   |
| 113. Tattling              | 129. Untidy with toys  |
| 114. Teases                | 130. Vain              |
| 115. Thoughtless of duties | 131. Wastes time       |
| 116. Thoughtless of others | 132. Whines            |

#### WHAT FAULTS PERTAIN TO EACH AGE LEVEL?

The experiences and results of this first year's work with parents and their problems indicated that probably one of the most effective ways to discover the acute needs of the children and parents was to ask the parents for a report of the faults of their children. In the second year of the extension courses for parents, an attempt was made to ascertain what faults in the list of 132 were most common to the different age levels of children. This list of undesirable traits was submitted to 7,250 parents, of whom 5,463 responded. In addition to underlining the flagrant faults of their children, they wrote on the questionnaires the age, sex, and grade of each child.

Two entirely different methods were used by the parents and teachers who worked together in collecting these data.

(1) Men and women who were active members of parent-teacher organizations advised the teachers to submit the list of undesirable traits to the parents through the medium of the children. By so doing, every parent in every room would be reached. Since, in each instance, the schools in which this investigation was made were putting on a program for character development, both teachers and parents were drawn together in a close study of the same problem. These lists were printed or mimeographed.



The questionnaire was headed by the following introductory paragraph:

We teachers and pupils of ..... School are working on a personality improvement program. We realize that in the degree the home and the school work together, in that degree will the lives of the children be made happier and better. Below is a list of 132 undesirable traits or habits common to children. Will you please underline today whatsoever of these undesirable habits your child or children are forming. Use a separate page for each child. Please return the marked list *sealed* to the teacher of your child not later than tomorrow.

When these lists have been returned, the teachers will record and tabulate the results on a large chart for the knowledge and use of parents and teachers only. The purpose of this study is to find out the most common undesirable habits which children of various ages may be forming. A special meeting of all parents with the particular teachers of their children will be held next Friday at 3:30 P.M. The children will be dismissed at that time so that the parents and teachers together may look over and study the tabulated results. Undoubtedly ways of helping the children overcome these faults will be suggested by parents and teachers for both home and school.

Be sure to underline the character traits, return the paper now, and come to see the results next Friday at 3:30 P.M.

(Then followed the list of 132 undesirable types of behavior and spaces in which to write the age, sex, and grade of the child.)

(2) The other method used to collect the list of faults of children for different age levels was as follows. The teachers sent a news letter or notice to the parents. This news letter read:

Dear Parents: The children of all grades will be dismissed at 3:30 P. M. next Friday so that their parents and teachers may have a special meeting together. Children will not be permitted to attend this meeting for its purpose is to discuss the advisability of launching an intelligent and concerted campaign by both parents and teachers for the enriching of child life through the enrichment of personality and the improvement of character. Results of similar attempts made elsewhere as well as some mimeographed plans are awaiting your coming. It is imperative that parents and teachers of their children discuss certain proposals for citizenship training so that team work may result. Plan to attend this meeting next Friday at 3:30 P.M.

Parents were reminded of this meeting through announcements in the churches, clubs, and movies, and by the children. When the meeting convened, the teacher or some parent acting as chairman presented the significance of forming right habits early in life, and pointed out specifically a few of the most troublesome traits of children. Then the list of 132 undesirable habits was given to each one, and the parents were asked then and there to study the list carefully and earnestly and to underline whatever of those traits their children might be forming. The teacher stated that on the following Friday school would be dismissed a little early again so that at a second meeting the parents could study with her the tabulated and charted list of these specific faults.

#### WHICH OF THE TWO METHODS WAS THE BETTER?

Each of the two methods used in collecting these data had its strong and its weak points. Local conditions and the personalities of those launching the study are often the determining factors as to which device to use.

The strong points of the first method are: (1) A high percentage of parents will respond to the questionnaire because everyone will be reached. (2) Much interest will be elicited for the special meeting of the parents and teachers, because any normal parent is curious to know how his child's faults compare with those of other children. (3) Initial interest is aroused and focal points for subsequent discussions are furnished.

The weak points are: (1) Some parents are certain to misunderstand the motive of the questionnaire, thinking the data asked for are too personal. A few insulting notes may be written to the teacher telling her that "you know nothing about raising children. Your job is to teach them to read and write." (2) The children may open the envelope when returning the questionnaire to the teacher, and in a few instances the more sensitive ones will be grieved to see that they have certain faults.<sup>1</sup> (3)

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<sup>1</sup> This weakness might be obviated by sending each parent a stamped envelope addressed to the school.

Some well-meaning mothers may refuse to cooperate and may write a letter similar to one received by a teacher who was helping in this work. The letter is reported verbatim:

"Dear teacher:

"Please pardon me for not complying with your wish. I looked carefully over the 132 weaknesses common to children but I find none that applied especially to Mary. She is such an adorable little child and always has been. Furthermore, I make it a practice never to see wrong in my children."

However, such a mother is sure to attend the meeting to view with sympathy the presentation of the many sins of her poor neighbors' children!

The strong points of the second method are: (1) There will be little room for misunderstanding, for all questions regarding the questionnaire and its motive can be answered fully again and again at this meeting of parents and teachers. (2) The enthusiasm or spirit incident to a group of mothers thinking seriously together upon a crucial problem will insure a more careful checking of the faults in the questionnaire. (3) The possibility that over-sensitive children may learn that their faults are being reported is minimized. A concerted plan of action can be agreed upon by the parents and teachers for the improvement of the children's personalities without the children's becoming aware of the source of the new regime.

The weak points of the second method are: (1) There will not be a full quota of parents out at the first meeting. Hence the number of questionnaires checked will be less than by the first method. (2) This first meeting in which the questionnaires are being checked may not be as gripping and electrical in its effect as the first one under Method No. 1, where the parents see the combined results of the questionnaires charted. (3) Unless the chairman and leaders in the meeting are well prepared and diplomatic, the "objectors" in the group may dampen the ardor of the meeting by refusing to co-operate, by criticising destructively, and by offering counter suggestions.

### WHAT WERE THE UNDESIRABLE TYPES OF CONDUCT THAT OCCURRED MOST FREQUENTLY?

As has been said, 7,250 questionnaires were given out to parents, and 5,463 replies received. Thus, approximately 75 per cent of the parents showed enough interest to participate directly in the study. The ranking and aggregate scores of the twenty-five most common faults are presented in the following table:

TABLE I  
THE TWENTY-FIVE MOST COMMON FAULTS AS GIVEN BY PARENTS

FAULT	RANKING	AGGREGATE	BOYS	GIRLS
Stubborn .....	1	1943	935	1008
Argues .....	2	1894	970	924
Slow in dressing .....	3	1563	904	659
Thoughtlessness about duties .....	4	1492	827	665
Slow to obey .....	5	1390	780	610
Teases .....	6	1238	727	511
Impatient .....	7	1217	625	592
Hates to go to bed .....	8	1203	526	677
Carelessness .....	9	1184	627	557
Nervousness .....	10	1128	485	643
Forgetfulness .....	11	1057	538	519
Bad temper .....	12	1047	556	491
Interrupting .....	13	990	523	467
Fear of dark .....	14	949	409	540
Excitability .....	15	945	385	560
Restlessness .....	16	905	442	463
Untidy in dress .....	17	868	530	338
Pouting .....	18	863	351	512
Talking too much .....	19	831	383	438
Easily influenced .....	20	807	426	381
Contradicts parents .....	21	792	403	389
Timidity .....	22	785	340	445
Fault finding .....	23	743	319	424
Quarrelsome .....	24	741	359	382
Bossiness .....	25	701	272	429

### WHAT FAULTS ARE COMMON TO EACH EDUCATIONAL GROUP?

The unclassified grouping of the twenty-five most frequently occurring faults of children, as set forth in Table I, is not definite enough for parents and teachers who are anxious to make a study of the specific maladjustments common to children of similar chronological age. Upon what basis to classify the pupils for

study by parents and teachers was a puzzling problem. Physiological, psychological, chronological, and educational age were each considered as a basis for classification. Finally, it was decided to divide this list into five lists: faults common to children of pre-school age, children in primary grades, intermediate grades, junior high, and senior high. Since parents and teachers, and not psychological experts, were the ones primarily concerned in this suggested cooperative study, it was considered that this grouping would be effective for the administration of their program; and it had the advantage of being thoroughly understood by them, as well as presenting no greater variability or overlapping of ages than any of the other methods.

TABLE II  
RANKING OF FIRST TWENTY-FIVE FAULTS IN PRE-SCHOOL, PRIMARY, AND INTERMEDIATE GROUPS

RANK	PRE-SCHOOL	PRIMARY	INTERMEDIATE
1.	Stubborn	Slow in dressing	Stubborn
2.	Argues	Stubborn	Argues
3.	Impatient	Argues	Slow in dressing
4.	Slow to obey	Slow to obey	Slow to obey
5.	Demands to be center of stage	Nervous	Thoughtless about duties
6.	Hates to go to bed	Impatient	Hates to go to bed
7.	Bad temper	Fears dark	Forgetful
8.	Dawdles over food	Hates to go to bed	Bad temper
9.	Interrupts	Teases	Teases
10.	Refuses to take naps	Careless	Nervous
11.	Excitable	Refuses to take naps	Impatient
12.	Fears dark	Thoughtless about duties	Fears dark
13.	Slow in dressing	Excitable	Interrupts
14.	Pouts	Whines	Bad temper
15.	Teases	Selfish	Excitable
16.	Timid	Forgetful	Restless
17.	Mischievous	Restless	Pouts
18.	Nervous	Pouts	Contradicts
19.	Meddlesome	Talks too much	Talks too much
20.	Shows off	Timid	Easily influenced
21.	Restless	Untidy with toys	Quarrelsome
22.	Untidy with toys	Dawdles over food	Untidy in room
23.	Whines	Demands attention	Slow to act
24.	Selfish	Mischievous	Timid
25.	Disobedient	Tattles	Bad table manners

Table II is read thus: In the pre-school group, "stubborn" ranked first in frequency of mention; "slow in dressing" ranked first in the primary group; and "stubborn" ranked first in the intermediate group; etc.



TABLE III

RANKING OF FIRST TWENTY-FIVE FAULTS IN JUNIOR HIGH AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GROUPS

RANK	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
1.	Stubborn	Stubborn
2.	Argues	Argues
3.	Thoughtless about duties	Thoughtless about duties
4.	Slow in dressing	Teases
5.	Teases	Forgetful
6.	Careless	Hates to go to bed
7.	Forgetful	Slow in dressing
8.	Bad temper	Interrupts
9.	Impatient	Finds fault
10.	Hates to go to bed	Careless
11.	Nervous	Forgetful
12.	Slow to obey	Nervous
13.	Untidy in dress	Untidy in room
14.	Talks too much	Impatient
15.	Interrupts	Slow to obey
16.	Quarrelsome	Reads too much
17.	Untidy in room	Timid
18.	Excitable	Bossy
19.	Bossy	Self-conscious
20.	Finds fault	Contradicts
21.	Pouts	Easily influenced
22.	Restless	Quarrelsome
23.	Contradicts	Excitable
24.	Reads too much	Procrastinates
25.	Easily influenced	Lacks self-control

Table III is read thus: "Stubborn" ranked first in frequency of mention in both the junior high school and senior high school groups; "argues" ranked second in both groups; etc.

A comparison of Tables II and III reveals that many of the faults which rank high in pre-school and primary groups rank high also in the senior high school group. This fact seems to indicate that there was no effective, corrective program operating either in the home or school.

#### HOW CAN THE METHOD OF APPROACH JUST DESCRIBED BE DEFENDED?

Some students of psychology and well-trained parents have assailed the authors for making a study of children's faults the basis for a character-education program. These persons think

that the approach should be positive; that is, that a list of desirable virtues that need strengthening, instead of a list of faults to be up-rooted, should be the starting point.

The chief arguments set forth for a positive approach are:

1. Parents and teachers are already too critical and too much inclined to nag, and see faults only.
2. Listing of faults is not a constructive method. From the beginning in such a program, attention is focused on the undesirable characteristics, when what we need is a concerted drive on traits that should be developed. Psychological experimentation indicates that direct, positive programs are most effective. The children concerned will have a more wholesome, inspiring environment in which to grow when the emphasis is positive.
3. In general, any scheme of rectification must be positive and constructive, rather than negative and destructive. By helping children "practice with satisfaction" the desirable character traits, the bad will be choked out by the phenomenal growth of the good.

There is no doubt in the minds of the authors that these criticisms are both sound and just. The authors' main reasons for using the negative approach are as follows:

1. It is a point of *departure* only. In no instance are these faults to be "held up" to the children as faults. Rather is the list to be used by parents that they may see just what the outstanding difficulties are; then, knowing these and recognizing their existence, parents and teachers may cooperate by setting up a *positive* program which will help the child. Too many parents and teachers, ostrich-like, either take no cognizance of growing maladjustments, or say, "Oh, he'll outgrow it." Either practice is little less than criminal!
2. Parents can more readily sense and express their children's faults than they can their virtues. This was experimentally established by the data on page 10.

3. Certain words in the English language seem to have no forceful, explicit opposites that even approximate them in clarity and poignancy of meaning. An attempt was made by several groups of parents and teachers to express adequately the opposites of such faults as stubborn, argues, teases, pouts, bullies, impudent, nervous, peevish, sly, stingy, whines, etc., and in only a very few instances could exact antonyms be found. It may be a deficiency in English on the part of teachers and parents, or it may be that the race has developed a "fault finding" attitude which is evidenced in our language equivalents. Whatever the reason may be, it was deemed impractical by these groups to express the list of faults as "virtues to be developed." Parents seem to understand the negative terminology perfectly. There is universal agreement as to what is meant when they say that a boy is stubborn, bossy, a smarty, a bully, a whiner, or a sneak. These words seem to have had for centuries a specific connotation. Try writing their opposites and see how pale or "washed out" becomes the list. Thus, for the sake of having certain symbols, tools, or handles which avoid indefiniteness and ambiguity, the negative list seemed preferable.
4. Many parents realized when they were marking the list that they were criticizing themselves. One mother wrote on her questionnaire, "I realize in marking these nine faults of my child that the weaknesses are not his, they are all mine. He learned from me. I saw myself today in him as never before." What more desirable attitude of mind could be wished for than to have parents realize that they themselves were being judged! Some parents may feel a warm glow of satisfaction in listing the faults of their children, but there is certain to be felt later a deep emotional reaction, when they realize that every child is the image of his environment, a replica of his home, the counterpart of his parents. For the nervous, careless, and irresponsible beget their kind as surely as do the poised, careful, and responsible.

5. Character rectification comes about only through replacing bad habits with good habits. One must know what the bad habits are, so as to eliminate each of them by setting up an opposite or substitute habit, the practice of which will cause death to the old through disuse. Again, the undesired habit should be recognized so that, through punishment or other means, disuse may hasten its death.

On page 151 is a list of 33 virtues which the 603 grade teachers who were cooperating with these parents selected as, in their opinion, the virtues in greatest need of practice by the children. The 312 high school teachers who were also cooperating with the parents selected a similar list of 33 virtues.

Of what value are the two major lists—namely, the 132 faults of children which are habits to be up-rooted, and the 33 virtues which are habits to be inculcated? It would seem that possibly their greatest service is to furnish parents and teachers with certain specific objectives that demand concerted attention, and to suggest to them in bold relief that every constructive character education program must be both *curative* and *preventive*.

Just as a physician first diagnoses the physical health needs of a community and then inaugurates a curative and preventive program, so the wise parent and teacher first diagnose the mental health needs of the children and then proceed to set up a stimulating, constructive environment which helps uproot the bad habits and encourages the formation of good habits.

#### WHAT GENERAL INFERENCES CAN BE DRAWN?

While it is desirable for parents and teachers to cooperate in making a list of the most common faults of their children, and for them to use the data for a series of study lessons, it would be a most pernicious and undesirable practice for them to parade these faults before the children, thus angering many, and humiliating the sensitive and timid. In brief, parents and teachers should be keenly alive to all the children's faults, and seek through a study of their origin to discover their specific causes and possible remedies. But the approach to the child should be

positive. If he has certain faults, let parents and teachers set up as objectives a series of activities, situations, and ways of living in the home and the school which will give much practice and satisfaction in right doing, and little opportunity for wrong doing.

This chapter is meant primarily to be suggestive to parents and teachers of the possibilities for child study inherent in every community. The methods used in collecting, recording, and presenting the data proved most effective in arousing the whole-hearted interest of the parents. The imperative need for a closer cooperation of the home and the school in the crucial problem of child training is evident from the investigation.

The tables setting forth the ranking of the faults are of value for comparative purposes only. Since fewer than 5,500 parents took part in the study, the ranking or frequency would doubtless be changed by added groups.

It must be remembered that these rankings are the results of the *parents'* responses. Undoubtedly in many instances what parents indicate as faults are really the basis for the development of much-to-be-desired characteristics. For example, parents are prone to call any child "stubborn" who evinces any tendency to have opinions of his own or who dares to stop and query "Why?" when told to do something. Often these very parents have a right to feel proud of the fact that their children have ideas, ambitions, urges, and wills of their own. One of the advantages of such a list and such a ranking is to help the parents see that in many instances the fault of "unreasonableness" or "bossiness" should have been checked against the parents themselves rather than against the child.

In the classes where these lists were used, the parents evinced much whole-hearted, enthusiastic interest in the study, reading, and discussion of character development and wholesome living relationships between parents and children. Parents and teachers are repaid many times for the effort of devising any method which bears such encouraging results.



CONCLUSION

1. The fundamental purpose of this chapter is to suggest to parents and teachers a technique or method of cooperative study and planning upon their common problem, the development of stability in character.
2. Two plans for initiating a cooperative character education program are suggested, both of which have been used successfully for three years in both rural and urban centers.
3. Every constructive character education program is both *preventive* and *curative*.
4. Taking the faults of children as a starting point for study and discussion will probably motivate parents and teachers as nothing else can to set up wholesome living environments which will be both curative and preventive.
5. Unless a diagnostic and remedial program for rectifying the faults of children is early initiated, the effectiveness of a preventive program is lessened.
6. The faults of the children are to be discussed from two angles: (1) causes, and (2) remedies. Usually before the first discussion is concluded, many of these 132 faults are seen to be *faults of the parents* which become the possessions of the children through imitation.
7. In no instance are the faults of the children *to be pointed out to them*, lest it antagonize, humiliate, or discourage them.
8. The primary objective of the parents and teachers in discovering the children's faults is that corrective, substitute habits and virtues may be objectified, practiced, and realized. For character rectification comes about by replacing bad habits with good habits.
9. The chief virtues of the parent-teacher study plan are: (1) It is an effective means of acquiring much needed knowledge of child nature. (2) It spurs parents and teachers to provide a twenty-four hour environment of wholesome living.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LASTING EFFECT OF CHILDREN'S FAULTS

How often we observe adults who are failing in their home, community, and vocational life chiefly because of childish reactions whenever a vexing situation arises! Faults which are pardonable in children are intolerable in adults. These "infantile carry-overs" often become the primary cause of adult failure and unhappiness. How can parents and teachers be made to appreciate the misery inherent in these faults, both in childhood and in later life?

A certain high school principal suggested to his teacher of mathematics that he go to summer school and take at least two courses. Before the principal had time to give his reasons for making this request or to specify the type of course he would like him to take, the teacher gave way to his bad temper, flew into a rage, and fairly shrieked, "Why pick on me? What about some of these old fossils around here? Why don't you say something to them?" Of course, that ended the interview. But a few weeks later what the principal had had in mind came to light. The principal's wife told a friend that this teacher had been her husband's first choice for vice-principal. The increase in salary would have been \$1,150 annually. When this news reached the teacher of mathematics and his wife, both realized that the chance of a lifetime for professional promotion had been lost.

A certain young woman of pleasing appearance and thorough academic and professional preparation was acting as secretary to the president of a large business. Not only did the position pay well, but it had a promising and desirable future. At least twice a week this young woman was late at her desk in the morning. Mild reproofs from the president and the chief supervisor always brought the stock excuse, "I'm so sorry; I'm slow at dressing, but I'll try not to be late again." After three weeks' trial she

was dismissed. The fact that her work was well done, that she needed the position and might eventually have been broken of that *slow in dressing* habit, did not make up for her morning inefficiency. Her employers engaged a secretary who needed no such disciplining.

A young man was acting temporarily as bank teller in a small bank. There was a possibility that he might be named permanently for the place. But, unfortunately, he was always a little late in the morning. His alibis were good: "The alarm did not go off"; "the landlady forgot to call me." He said he had always been a little "forgetful" since childhood. After a few influential customers, who always came early to attend to their banking business, had been kept waiting several mornings, two things happened: (1) These business men changed to another bank, and (2) the young man was summarily discharged.

A certain young man, the promising superintendent of schools in a small town, was recommended so highly by the university of which he was an alumnus and by the members of the board in the town in which he was living that a certain board of education in a much larger town in an adjoining state decided to offer him the superintendency of their school system. However, one member insisted on a personal interview. The candidate for the superintendency met with the Board at a luncheon. But the unpolished table manners and untidiness of dress of this prospective superintendent affected the board members so unfavorably that his outstanding virtues were discounted, and further consideration of his candidacy was refused.

Another young man was graduated with honors in the history department of a large western university. Through his father's professional contacts and the boy's scholastic record he secured immediately an enviable position in a city high school. During the mid-semester test one impulsive student in his class vigorously questioned the fairness of the examination. The savage temper of the teacher was aroused and, losing all self-control, he seized the boy and shook and choked him unmercifully. That night the Board of Education held a special meeting. The bril-

liant young man was considered unfit to instruct high school students and was asked to resign immediately.

#### WILL CHILDHOOD FAULTS BE OUTGROWN OR CORRECTED?

One often hears parents say, "Of course my children have faults; but they'll outgrow them. They'll get over them as they do the mumps or measles. It doesn't bother me that Bobby is sulky, that Billy tells lies." But such statements are only half-truths. Certainly children do have many faults; and apparently they get over some of them. But at what cost? Look at the examples cited in the preceding pages. Promotions were denied, positions lost, and brilliant young people had to make a second and harder start because of some infantile carry-over. A few bitter experiences such as those young people passed through will undoubtedly convince them of the seriousness of their handicap and help them control an ungovernable temper, help them learn to dress quickly, to get over being forgetful, to cultivate good table manners and tidiness in dress, and to exercise self-control. But what a price is paid! Look at the humiliation, disgrace, remorse, and mental anguish suffered before a satisfactory adjustment is made or the fault is overcome! It is evident that eventually some of these habits formed in early childhood are corrected; but the price paid in nervous energy and emotional strain is normally too great, and it is often appalling. It is equally true that many of these faults, becoming stronger and stronger, are a lasting heritage. In the degree that they exist in number and virulence, life is marred and success and happiness blighted.

#### WHERE ARE FAULTS ACQUIRED IN CHILDHOOD OFTEN CORRECTED?

Too often the faults of children are left for correction to police courts, criminal courts, reformatories, and penitentiaries. However, the majority of corrections are made in less spectacular ways after repeated reprimands, rebuffs, and dismissals have been experienced from those in authority, or from the consequences of breaking natural laws. In some cases the victims themselves,

because of non-promotion, half-successes, and near failures, try to analyze their weaknesses to get at the cause of their trouble, and then by sheer force of will and the pull of ambition succeed partially in overcoming the worst of their childhood handicaps. Again, a wife, an associate, or some other friend may take such an interest in an individual as to help him make the necessary self-analysis, set up the program for rectification, and put it consistently into practice. But however the cure or partial cure is accomplished, the cost is excessive to the victim, his family, his associates, and his employers. Surely the lessons could have been learned more economically in other ways!

#### WHERE SHOULD THE FAULTS OF CHILDREN BE CORRECTED?

The faults of children should be corrected in the home and in the school. These two institutions are set apart for the development of all that is best in the potentialities and capabilities of children. Here both sympathy and understanding must be present in order to effect the desired change. Too often parents and teachers who are sympathetic have but little understanding of child nature and its needs. A professor of sociology, when driving along an out-of-the-way country road, noticed a little lost, runty pig. Getting out of his car, he picked up the little fellow. Said he in relating this incident, "You see, I had plenty of pig sympathy, but no pig understanding. So I wrapped him in an old blanket, put him in the back of my car, and took him back to the agricultural college of the university, where, because there was pig understanding in abundance, the little fellow developed into a fine big pig."

Sympathy and understanding are the two paramount requisites for teachers and parents. Possessing these, they can prevent the growth of certain undesirable habits or, if a beginning has already been made, can so direct the life of the child that the detrimental characteristics can be uprooted. The bad habits of childhood are at that stage not deeply ingrained nor permanently formed. The nervous system is still plastic and modifiable, so that substitute neurone paths or habits can be built up. Teachers and parents



who fail to accept the responsibility of helping to shape good habits should come under the condemnation of the little girl of five who, seeing an old mother cat carrying her baby kitten by the nape of the neck, cried, "Shame on you. You're not fit to be a mother. Why, you're hardly fit to be a father!"

### CONCLUSION

1. The faults of childhood, if not corrected, grow in strength with adulthood, making success and happiness most difficult.
2. No adult is free from some of these childish faults or "infantile carry-overs." Their number and virulence determine largely one's handicap in seeking self-realization.
3. The faults of childhood need not become carry-overs into adulthood. These faults should be corrected in the home and the school, where there are both love and understanding.
4. The greatest objective for parent-teacher study groups ought to be to help the children break loose from the clutches of bad habits which will surely bring them failure, and to lay hold of good habits, which will as surely bring success.
5. It is a child's birthright to have his chance to succeed and to be happy. He is not born to fail. Too often he soon is laden with a burden of faults—imitated adult habits—which make life's race a losing one.
6. Sympathy and understanding are the key-words in all remedial work.
7. There is no excuse for children growing up with many vicious habits. Parents and teachers should try to set up constructive programs which will stimulate the development of wholesome, desirable traits, and thus make for happy, successful adjustments to the child's daily problems.

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## SECTION II

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THESE FAULTS OF  
CHILDREN?





## CHAPTER IV

### THE EFFECT OF SUGGESTION AND IMITATION UPON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

In examining the list of 132 faults presented in Chapter II, it can be seen that many of them may have been developed through imitation. Bad table manners, carelessness, deceitfulness, excitability, fault-finding, impatience, irritability, lack of self-control, nervousness, dishonesty, fear, unfairness, rudeness, quarrelling, blaming others, boasting, being bossy, discontent, extravagance, forwardness, impoliteness, impulsiveness, interest in improper food, lack of respect, mischievousness, unfriendliness, uncleanness, lack of thoroughness, poor sportsmanship, pouting, roughness, selfishness, self-consciousness, being slow to act, slyness, acting "smart," showing off, stubbornness, supersensitiveness, taking advantage, thoughtlessness of others, thoughtlessness of duties, timidity, unkindness, slang, vanity, whining, untidiness in room, untidiness in dress and in care of toys—all are doubtless more or less the result of the child's living in an environment where these defects were found. Certainly, the child was not born with them. Children know only what they see, hear, or experience in some other way. These undesirable habits are the result of the power of suggestion upon impressionable, imitative young lives which were exposed to a faulty environment.

#### HOW IS THE POWER OF SUGGESTION SHOWN IN THE HABITS OF CHILDREN?

A reading of this list of faults suggests that many of them are the results of the child's living in a highly emotional home, school, or community environment. One of the saddest observations forced daily upon us is the literally hundreds of healthy, impressionable children reared in homes and schools where outbursts of temper, extreme nervousness, fears, spasmodic fits of excitability,

and lack of self-control constitute for the most part the environment of the child. Such children are without protection. Their nervous systems are plastic. They have no philosophy of life nor standards which help them ward off the effects due to the emotional stimulus of a mother's cringing timidity, a father's tyrannical stubbornness, an older brother's vanity and show of superiority, or a sister's alternate moods of impulsiveness and pouting. The child simply cannot escape the damaging effects of such an unwholesome, emotional environment.

The influence of his environment can plainly be seen in many of the child's social maladjustments. When and from where did these faults come? Were the children born with these undesirable traits? When home and community life condone and overtly participate in lying, cheating, taking advantage of others, what protection has the child? When he sees slyness, selfishness, and unfairness practiced purposefully and stealthily, when he daily hears his father denounce everybody as a crook and listens to his threat to "take all he can get for as little as possible" and "to do others before they do me," can he escape a similar reaction to his social relationships?

Again, how do such personal maladjustments as carelessness, untidiness in rooms or with toys or in dress, bad table manners, slowness in dressing, or complaining about food, develop? Where does the child get his personal habits? If he observes that father undresses all over the house, and that it takes mother and sister some thirty minutes in the morning to find his clothes and get him "assembled," can one wonder that the child is untidy and unsystematic? If he daily sees untidy rooms, with clothes draped over the chairs, books and newspapers scattered over the floors, can one expect him to be the epitome of neatness and system? Living in such an environment, he will accept it as right and consequently will himself acquire slothful, untidy, wasteful habits.

Thus, the part that a suggestive environment plays, when acting upon a sensitive and imitating nervous organism, is all too evident. An appreciation of the influence of environment upon habit formation is necessary for anyone who would direct child life.

### WHY IS IMITATION SO IMPORTANT A FACTOR IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

From the beginning of life, the child is copying the sights and sounds about him. Both consciously and unconsciously, he imitates the language, mannerisms, and emotional reactions of his associates. What we imitate, we become. What we practice *with satisfaction*, we make our own. Rudeness begets rudeness, deceit begets deceit just as surely as gentleness begets gentleness, and truthfulness begets truthfulness.

Thus, one's ways of reacting (habits) are determined by the play of environment upon one's impulses. For example, the response to the impulse of fear (an impulse prevalent in all life) may be influenced greatly by environmental factors. One can imagine how the attitude of a mother might cause a child to display any one of the following during a fierce electric storm: (1) frantic fear; (2) cautious fear; (3) reverence for an unseen power; (4) pleasure in the electrical display; or (5) scientific interest in the natural phenomena.

As a result of frequent exposure to such conditions, any one of the following habitual responses would result: (1) abject cowardice; (2) an attitude of caution; (3) resignation to a higher power; (4) pleasure in the electrical display; or (5) appreciation of the manifestations of nature acting in accordance with natural law.

Thus, the quality and degree of development of the fear impulse is dependent upon its interaction with its medium—environment. As with fear, so it is with all impulses. They may be used or abused, developed or distorted, by the environment in which they are nourished.

### HOW DO THE CUSTOMS AND HABITS OF ADULTS AFFECT CHILDREN?

Habits of parents, such as the way they think, act, and look upon life, largely constitute the social environment of the little child. He early reflects the mannerisms and attitudes of those about him.

It is not only possible to trace the roots of many of our most important adult traits back to the period of infancy, but it also must be noted that some of these traits often become so firmly established at the age of four or five years that they may persist practically unmodified throughout the remainder of our lives. As examples we may cite such traits and characteristics as temper, stubbornness, diffidence, grit, self-reliance, initiative, perseverance, candor, honesty, and deceit. While it is entirely possible that certain of these childhood traits may find their origin in some native propensity for action, yet we must recognize the fact that any trait as exhibited by a four year old child has undergone a considerable amount of development, and we must also avoid the quite common error of regarding the strength and early appearance of a trait as a sufficient proof of its native character.<sup>1</sup>

Since the habits and the customs of a people constitute their social environment, and since original impulses depend upon the environment for their blossoming and fruition into acquired reactions or habits, the importance of the environment as a factor in character development is not to be lightly passed over. This ought to encourage parents and teachers to redouble their efforts in the providing of a rich, varied, and stimulating environment, for one's impulses can be developed into practically any kind of mental habit, i. e., attitude, disposition, or trait.

#### HOW DOES PLASTICITY OF THE NERVOUS ORGANISM AFFECT HABIT FORMATION?

The extreme plasticity of the child's nervous mechanism makes him very sensitive to environmental conditions. Impressions are easily made, and their influence operates over a long period of time. That a child of five years is much more easily impressed and influenced by an experience or suggestion than he will be by a similar exposure at thirty-five is patent. This is true, not so much because his nervous tissue in adult life has appreciably hardened, as because he has built up in later life a rigid system of nerve paths in the way of habits, beliefs, and attitudes which discount, ignore, or throw off any suggestion that might arise.

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey A. Carr, *Psychology: A Study of Mental Activity* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), pp. 342-3.

Before he can be taught much at thirty-five, he must first "unlearn" much, that is, break up several chains of habits and mental sets acquired in earlier life.

**Plasticity a hindrance.** The excessive plasticity of the child is not an unmixed blessing. For instance, a thoroughly honest man will be little affected by an example of dishonesty. He reacts in terms of his former habits of honor, and hence is little influenced from one more exposure to dishonesty. But the little child is different. He has no fixed habits, notions, or ideals of honesty. He is unprotected. He sees certain desirable ends gained in a thrilling way by a certain twist of reality. He is at once inoculated, so to speak, with dishonesty. He responds to this new and tense experience with his whole nervous system, much as the baby does who wiggles its whole body in attempting to grab a watch. Since his response to the stimulating experience is complete and tense, feelings and emotions arise which tie up the situation or suggestion with many nerve centers. A few distinctive experiences are often sufficient to initiate some characteristic mode of reaction which, under favorable circumstances, may soon develop such a strength as to be resistant to all sporadic attempts at social control.

Thus, early in his youth, we impress upon the child, with no little emotional zest, our notions of morality, politics, economics, and religion. Many of these notions are biased and without foundation. But being in this plastic period, the child accepts them all without question. So deeply ingrained do they become, that later he thinks of them as his own original discoveries. These outgrown customs are accepted before he is old enough to question, doubt, or criticize them. Consequently, as an adult, he is blind to their irrationalities, idiosyncracies, and inconsistencies.

**Plasticity a help.** But plasticity of impulse may be utilized in producing the positive and beautiful as well as the negative and despicable. If children are exposed to an atmosphere of initiative, tolerance, creative thinking, perseverance, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, sympathy, and service, these stimuli, too, will release feelings and emotions that will unite and assimilate these virtues with the very warp and woof of the nerve learning centers. Children are



always learning; they learn much when not being formally taught. A wonderful opportunity is given to parents and teachers for setting up such an environment that independence of thought may result and lead to higher social planes of living.

That the most precious part of plasticity consists in ability to form habits of independent judgment and inventive initiation has been ignored. . . . In short, among the native activities of the young are some that work towards accommodation, assimilation, reproduction, and others that work toward exploration, discovery and creation. But the weight of adult custom has been thrown upon retaining and strengthening tendencies toward conformity and against those which make for variation and independence.<sup>2</sup>

The hope of the race is in its youth. The child is not yet enslaved to fixed habits. He has impulsive urges to imitate, to believe, and to memorize; but equally strong are his urges to think, to criticize, and to create. Because of the plasticity of his nervous organism, the environment to which he is subjected is a potent factor in determining whether his habits will be narrow and selfish or broad and altruistic.

#### HOW IS STRENGTH OF HABIT SHOWN IN LIFE?

Habits are commands to activity. They are impelling and compelling commands to act, often being in this respect stronger than some impulses. We have only to recall the driving power of some bad habits, such as gambling, drunkenness, and thieving, in order to appreciate the hold that habits may have on an individual.

What will is. In fact, habits constitute the will. We say, "He is a man of iron will," meaning, of course, one with ability to make a decision in the face of great conflict and temptation. But did *he* make the decision? No, it was his previously formed judgments that made it. In brief, his habits made the decision. A weak-willed man is one with weak habits, that is, one whose habits have not been organized into certain distinctive demarcations and integrations wherein some are subservient to others. In

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<sup>2</sup> John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Henry Holt and Co., 1922), pp. 97-8.

such a case, nothing is settled as to the priority of one habit over another. There is a state of indecision.

**How decisions are made.** A man prides himself in saying, "I think so and so." "*It* thinks," is really the truth of the matter. His previously formed tastes and habits determine his choices and decisions. Thus do one's habits control his thinking. Some men could no more be progressive in thinking than a motor car could run through a jungle. These men have been exposed to anti-progressive habits of thinking (environment) from infancy. Their ultra-conservative habits make constructive thinking an impossibility. We do not choose our friends. "It"—our habits—choose them. Of course, our friends are very agreeable and wise folk. Certainly they are agreeable, because their tastes, habits, and philosophy of life are perfectly in tune with our own. "Birds of a feather flock together" is a psychologically sound proverb. Our friends are clever because their degree of intelligence is either on a par with or a little superior to our habits of thinking.

**What character is.** Character is often defined as the sum total of one's interrelated responses of thinking, feeling, and acting. If you know a man's habits, you know the man. That is why we can predict with precision the possibilities or probabilities of reaction in adults. They first made their habits; but in turn they are ruled by them. Since character is the product of the interaction of human nature upon its environment, and *vice versa*, and since it would appear that environment plays a leading role in character development, the future is rich in promise and hope. Impulses are ever eager to respond to stimuli, and many become integrated into the finest of habits and dispositions. *When the habits that go to make a life receive the emphasis that is now placed upon those intellectual and vocational habits that go to make a living, we may expect a happier, worthier, and more successful epoch in human history.*

**How one's destiny is determined.** Strength of habit is beautifully summed up by James:

All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits, —practical, emotional, and intellectual—systematically organized

for our weal or woe, and bearing us irresistibly toward our destiny whatever that may be. . . . Ninety-nine hundredths or, possibly, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of our activity is purely automatic and habitual from our rising in the morning to our lying down each night. . . . The teacher's prime concern should be to ingrain into the pupil that assortment of habits that shall be most useful to him throughout life. Education is for behavior, and habits are the stuff of which behavior consists.<sup>3</sup>

#### WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES ARE TO BE OBSERVED IN HABIT FORMATION?

The individual's habits grow out of the customs of those about him. An impulsive, impressionable nature interacts with satisfaction with a stimulating and domineering set of customs, called environment, and another domineering personality is developed. An impulse to do something becomes organized into an interest or a habitual way of acting. For example, take the impulse of curiosity. Expose it to a gossiping environment only, and a gossiping personality will probably be developed. But expose it to a stimulating, scientific environment, and the result may be a satisfying response, tending by repetition to become a specialized interest in some field of scientific research.

Experiences and habits. But the crucial observation for parents and teachers to note is that a habit comes usually only after many satisfying experiences. For example, taste for good music is the result of experiencing pleasure in listening to or creating good music; appreciation for beautiful china comes only after one has experienced joy in seeing and using beautiful china. So it is with the development of such cardinal character traits as courage and cheerfulness. The child must be an active, satisfied participant in experiences where courage and cheerfulness predominate before he can have sharply defined notions of their meaning, and an earnest desire for their possession.

The three steps in habit formation. Both the school and the home need to make a closer study of the psychology of habit for-

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<sup>3</sup> William James, *Talks to Teachers* (Henry Holt and Co., 1916), pp. 64-6.

mation. All too frequently, we spend our time setting up ideals before the pupils. This is done sincerely, thoroughly, and with no little emotional zest. Our next step is to create a desire in the child to make that ideal his own. But these two steps are not enough. There is character growth only when they are followed by actual doing. In fact, to see the ideal and to desire it passionately, yet never to strive systematically to attain it, may produce most damaging effects. In this way the moral muscles are immeasurably weakened. The number is legion who hear weekly the ideal of truth preached from the pulpit; probably many feel an emotional glow for its realization; but, if there is no positive action for change in conduct, little good is accomplished. If there are frequent, stirring repetitions of the presentation of the truth, accompanied by emotional glow, but still no change in conduct, the hearers are actually worse off than they were in the beginning. For, slowly but surely, they become calloused and completely insulated from the things that used to move them. Thus *to know* and *to feel* the need of change, but never *to act*, is moral and emotional suicide.

**Significance of the third step.** A man whose health is failing from over-work and strain realizes his condition. So does his family. He *desires* good health. The family urges the necessity of a change in living. He buys a golf outfit and enthusiastically plans wholesome and energizing forms of recreation. He *sees* the ideal—regained health. He *desires* it keenly. But, if he stops there, he fails. He must practice faithfully those types of behavior which will make his goal—good health—a reality.

In short, if one desires to reach a certain end, let him take his mind off it and attend to the act which is next to be performed. Of the three steps in the formation of habits—namely, (1) setting up in clear relief the habit to be attained, (2) creating a passionate desire to achieve the goal, and (3) setting up a series of performances or initiating a machinery of procedure which will produce the desired end—pin faith to the third step. Only in the degree that the child's emotional desire to achieve can be utilized in carrying out with zest the series of acts that lead to perfection

can it be useful. Possessing the ideal and desiring to attain it are of little value, unless there is correct guidance at every point.

It should not be inferred from this that parents and teachers are to discontinue setting up ideals, nor lessen their zeal in creating healthy desires. But we should concentrate our energies upon setting up conditions, situations, or machinery which will surely and effectively produce the desired habits of conduct. In the life experiences of children is to be found the raw material for the method of procedure. Living together wholesomely and sharing big responsibilities are experiences so full of stimulating opportunities that, if the child's leaders have but the courage and the vision, wonderful progress in character development will surely result.

#### WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION?

The great hope of mankind is in the *education of the child*. Children are not hopelessly enmeshed in the snares of custom. Their minds are fresh and free from inhibitions. They are teeming with energy. They are driven on to achieve by the impulse to know, to explore, and to build. If we but give them a fair chance to form their own opinions, to make their own judgments, and to do their own thinking, great forward strides are possible.

Our duty as teachers and parents is obvious. We must see that the children are exposed to conditions which will encourage and challenge them to think, to evaluate, to criticize constructively, and to construct a better world in which to live. Their impulsive life needs only sympathetic and wise direction. We must help them, through a stimulating environment, not only to uproot unwholesome and stunting habits, but to develop such positive habits as tolerance, service, and cooperation. If we can make it possible for them to live in an environment that demands thinking, reasoning, and judging, if we can make reason a custom, and prejudice and narrow-mindedness a disgrace, we need have no fears for future generations.

The power inherent in a suggestive environment to stimulate emotionalized responses in children evokes at once great hopes as



well as dire fears, in parents and teachers. Human destinies are determined through suggestion and imitation, acting upon impressionable minds. Many of the faults mentioned in this chapter owe their origin and strength of development to a suggestive, bad environment. Only by a wholesome environment, wherein good responses supplant the bad, can we hope to uproot the evil. A stimulating and wholesome environment thus becomes our hope.

### CONCLUSION

1. Children learn more in their early years through imitation than in any other way.
2. Probably many or all of the faults listed on pages 10-12 are learned more through imitation than we have hitherto realized.
3. The child's nervous system is so sensitive and so comparatively free from established nerve patterns that he is very susceptible to any strong stimulus in his environment.
4. Plasticity is the name given to this sensitive, impressionable nerve condition in childhood.
5. But this plasticity may be either a blessing or a curse, because the child's nervous system reacts to the bad with the same facility that it does to the good.
6. If his impressionable nervous organism is exposed to an environment of poise, gentleness, open-mindedness, honesty, tidiness, thrift, courage, and creative thinking, the laws of learning and their correlates can do only one thing—develop nerve patterns or types of behavior which are the exact replicas of the virtues named.
7. The environment then becomes the controlling factor in the making of human destiny. But the child's environment is largely the sum total of the habits, opinions, and customs of his parents and teachers. If their habits of thinking, feeling, and doing are narrow, base, cruel, or despicable, what chance has the child or civilization to make progress? This may account for the fact that after all the years of

human existence we still have much of the spirit of "the jungle" in our group living.

8. The progress of civilization is almost, if not entirely, dependent upon the kind and degree of stimuli to which the race subjects its children. If we, as guardians, expose their impressionable, plastic nervous mechanisms to the best the race has produced, and if we challenge and encourage these children to remake and recreate the race's past, all to the end that the new will be nobler and better than the old, progress will come with unprecedented celerity and certainty.
9. The stultifying sin of the adult is that he "frowns upon" and "discourages" those opinions and suggestions that differ from his own. Too often he believes he is thinking, when as a matter of fact he is simply rearranging his own prejudices.

#### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Parents and teachers are encouraged to use the case study method in handling all their disciplinary problems. The essence of this method is: Find out the several pertinent causes of the child's misconduct so that sympathy and understanding may guide you in helping the child make a wholesome adjustment. The following questions, which were an outgrowth of several parent-teacher study meetings, were found, in several cases, to be of inestimable value in setting up remedial measures.

##### CARELESS, FORGETFUL, THOUGHTLESS ABOUT DUTIES

1. Could a child who was raised in a home or school where carelessness, shiftlessness, and forgetfulness were the rule fail to acquire such traits?
2. Is it not child nature to have transitory interests, going from one activity to another without stopping to finish the drab, menial details that are incident to many of his activities? How strict shall we be?
3. Do we expect too much of children? Are adult standards of carefulness and thoughtfulness often too high? Where has the child had a chance to learn certain habits of control over his impulsive drives?

4. Are the child's parents and teachers consistent in their daily checkups? Do they demand carefulness and thoughtfulness one day, and let him "get by" the next?
5. Does the child gain by his carelessness, forgetfulness, and neglect of duties? What will be the effect upon his future reactions? For example, if he carelessly leaves his bicycle by the curb where it is run over by a truck will he not put a premium on carelessness if he knows he can soon have a new one?
6. Does he hear his parents or teachers telling others that he is the most careless boy that ever lived? He may come to believe them, or at least to accept the implication and try to live up to his reputation.
7. Would one of the most effective ways of helping the child overcome these three faults be to let him suffer from the direct results of practicing them? Are annoyance and failure not often as effective teachers as satisfaction and success? For instance, if a child habitually loses pocket knives almost as fast as they are given to him, would it not be well to refuse to buy another, or allow him to have any other for, say, three months? Deep-rooted faults require drastic remedial measures.
8. Would it help the child to overcome habits of forgetfulness and carelessness, if he were given more responsibilities of significance (as he sees it) in the home and school, wherein carefulness and thoughtfulness were absolutely necessary for him to succeed, and for which, when his work was well done, he received generous praise from parents, teachers, or fellow students?
9. Does an adult have a moral right to be careless and yet punish a child for displaying a kindred fault? Usually a child has a keen sense of justice.

#### UNTIDINESS WITH REGARD TO ROOM, CLOTHES, TOYS, AND BOOKS

1. Has the child been reared in a home or school where untidiness prevailed? He knows only what he has experienced.
2. Does he gain by his untidiness? Does some one clean up his mussy, freeing him of this distasteful task?
3. Does he use his untidiness to become the center of excitement and aggravation?
4. Are neighbors told in his presence that his room is a sight and that he is a hopeless case?

5. Are parents and teachers consistent, or do they have spasmodic attacks of tidiness?
6. Should the standards be high at first?
7. Would letting the child suffer occasionally as a result of his untidiness be a wise, educative procedure? For instance, a boy who was untidy in his room could not find his clean clothes one morning. Consequently, he missed the bus, had to walk to school, was late, had to stay after school to make up time, and thereby missed the bus home. A quiet talk with him regarding the cause of his bad day was effective. He saw, first hand, the need of system.
8. Would providing the child a room of his own and holding him responsible for keeping it in first-class condition give desirable practice in tidiness?
9. Could one begin with children a year old and help them experience satisfaction putting away their toys and playthings before taking a nap?
10. Should not each child have at least a shelf or corner of a room, if it is not possible for him to have a whole room, for his very own use? Could he be trained to compare his room with that of other members of the household?
11. Could home and school be organized on a democratic basis, where each member was held responsible for the performance of certain specific duties?
12. What would be the advantages of making tidiness the basis for competition? The teacher in the school or the mother in the home could act as judge, at the end of each week giving the decision as to who had been up to standard.
13. Why not have all the members of the home or school list those situations in which untidiness has been most prominent, then make a chart of these life situations, and check themselves daily by the chart? Even adults have shown marked improvement as a result of such a plan. The total score at the end of each week could be compared to the total possible score.
14. Why not help the child by listing, on a cardboard in his room, the tidying chores he should do each morning and before going to bed? Let him check off each item as soon as it is attended to. Often chores are forgotten; but with this constant reminder it is easy and interesting for him to check up on himself.
15. Would daily inspection of one another's room and friendly rivalry help? Would not inviting neighbors to see how

tidy the child kept his room be effective? At school, visitors from other rooms might be invited. There is usually too much adverse criticism, not enough praise and appreciation in the life of the child.

DISHONESTY, LYING, DECEITFULNESS, SLYNESS

1. Would it help the child who sometimes displayed the above traits, if adults made a careful investigation to discover the cause of such misdemeanors?
2. Is not lying, for the most part, based on fear of punishment? The child cheats on a test, steals something, or in a fit of jealous rage hits someone. He expects punishment. What is more natural than to try to escape it? What is more logical than to deny having done the wrong? Could much lying be eliminated, if all fear were removed, and if children realized that severe punishment would not follow, provided they told the truth? Then, help the child, when he does confess, by pointing out how little is gained by such behavior, by analyzing the cause of his trouble, and by showing how he can prevent its recurrence.
3. Would a child raised in an environment where lying is condoned, even regarded as clever, be other than dishonest when it served his purpose? Does the child ever observe the dual life in the home, such as saying one thing to a guest and quite another when he is gone? Does the child distinguish between the so-called "social fibs" of his parents and his own attempts to deceive?
4. Is it not wrong to classify the daydreaming, make-believe, and fancy of little children as base lying?
5. Is lying often caused by a child's desire to satisfy his ego, making himself out a hero? Why not provide occasions where he wins, thus saving him not only from lying but from becoming an introvert, a weakling, or one who fears reality?
6. Do parents and teachers keep their promises? If they do not, will the child think it is serious to lie and deceive occasionally?
7. Does not the child often get into mischief, then lie to save himself? Could the unfortunate episode have been averted by providing him a stimulating environment?
8. Have children not often profited by lying, *e.g.*, being allowed to keep the stolen articles or passing the difficult test?



9. Shall we always be certain that we know the child's motive for lying? Often our demands, standards, or the conditions under which he works provoke him to lie. He has pride. He wants to measure up to some standard. He will do so by means either fair or foul. Should we not know the basic motives in every instance?
10. Would not "palship" between the adult and the child establish such confidence that a child would tell all, if he did slip?
11. Could a cooperative scheme between parent and child in the home, and teacher and child in the school, be worked out, in which fear of punishment for lying would be removed, and in which the child would be given opportunities to live his own life, to see and confess his own blunders, prescribe his own corrections, and thus get more satisfaction in doing the right than formerly he got in doing wrong?

## CHAPTER V

### THE EFFECT OF DENIAL UPON CERTAIN INBORN TENDENCIES

A young mother and her eighteen-months old daughter created something of a scene on a train recently. Apparently, the two had been traveling for some time, for the mother, in a state of exhaustion, was heard to exclaim, "This baby is driving me wild!" Now, as a matter of fact, the child was being "driven wild" or into a state of hysteria because of the mother's ignorance of child nature. This little bundle of activity had been on the train all day. She had no doll, no picture book, no pencil and paper, no crayolas, not a toy nor an article of interest to *her* on this tedious journey. Neither was the child allowed to walk up and down the aisle, stand up in her seat, pull at the curtain, jump, kick, or exercise in any way. Two things she was permitted to do—sit still like an adult or go to sleep. As she chose to do neither, is it any wonder that both mother and baby had frayed nerves at the end of such a day?

### WHY SHOULD PARENTS AND TEACHERS STUDY SERIOUSLY THE IMPULSES OF CHILDHOOD?

What was the chief difficulty in the whole situation? The mother did not seem to understand child life. She did not realize that the first, last, and middle name of any healthy normal child is activity. She did not know that to inhibit this innate tendency is one of the most uncalled for and cruel of punishments, both mental and physical, that can be inflicted upon a child.

Probably every reader has witnessed similar combats between parent and child. The reason why so many children enter the kindergarten or first grade spoiled, emotionally and temperamentally, is no longer a mystery.

All too frequently one hears some teacher, near the close of

the day declare, "These children are the limit. I'm just a rag!" Possibly there are forty other human beings in the room who are "rags." And why? Because the teacher does not understand child life and its needs. She, too, has forgotten her child psychology. Since activity is the first law of life, why not adjust subject matter, method, and time schedule to it? Failure to do so results in frayed nerves, spoiled dispositions, unwholesome thoughts, and, often, bad behavior. As adults or children, mankind is as yet ruled more by impulses and feelings than by reason. Can we then study too carefully and conscientiously the nature and development of the impulsive life of the child?

#### WHY MUST THE CHILD'S IMPULSIVE URGES HAVE AN OUTLET?

The child is a bundle of impulsive inner urges to action. He must talk, whisper, turn, twist, run, jump, touch hands, taste, and, in fact, be on the move mentally and physically during his waking hours. All this is natural. His instinctive tendencies to explore, examine, boss, make, create, construct, and collect are impelling and compelling drives to activity. Let these inborn tendencies to act be denied an outlet and he will either become nervous, irritable, and disobedient or else seek an outlet of his own which we adults wrongly label "mischief."

A father left his four-year old son in his study for a few minutes. When he returned, he found the child wholeheartedly engaged in red penciling the one exposed wall. The father's first impulse was to punish the boy severely. But, upon second thought, he realized that the child had neither a blackboard nor large drawing paper and that, in marking the wall, he was only following his impelling urge to draw, to create, to express himself. Within a few hours a piece of blackboard, some chalk, and an eraser had been added to the furniture in the child's room. He was then helped in his drawing for a few minutes. At this juncture, it was explained to him that he must *never* write on walls, windows, or floors again; that other people's property must be left alone; and that he must draw either on his own blackboard or on some large paper, which was also supplied. Needless to

say, the child never disregarded this appeal of the parent. He at last had a legitimate outlet for his energetic desires to create and to play.

Within the normal life of every child, walls are marked, curtains pulled down, thimbles and scissors poked down registers, electric toasters burned out, mirrors and windows broken, furniture marked up or demolished, valuable machinery damaged, often beyond repair. Adults call these expensive escapades mischief and deviltry. Both terms are really misnomers. The child's impulsive life is merely seeking outlets for a variety of urges toward activity. A highly sensitive nervous organism is merely responding to the stimuli of its environment. If an outlet satisfactory to both child and adult is not provided, one of two things happens: either the child seeks, and often finds, one that leads to trouble, or, if he is entirely restricted, he develops several unhealthy habit traits.

WHAT UNDESIRABLE HABITS IN CHILDREN MIGHT HAVE  
ORIGINATED BECAUSE THEIR INSTINCTIVE TENDENCIES WERE DENIED AN OUTLET?

In looking over the list of 132 undesirable types of children's behavior, cited in Chapter II, one might select the following as owing much of their origin and strength to a barren or restricted environment: arguing; bad temper; boisterousness; tendency to contradict; cowardice; being easily influenced; lack of self-confidence, consideration, concentration, initiative, cooperation, and stick-to-it-iveness; deceit; dependent; destructive; discontent; dishonesty; disobedience; disrespect; running away; teasing; unkind; slyness; stubbornness; selfishness; sullenness; disregard of duties; untidiness; whining; impatience; impudence; impoliteness; laziness; meddlesomeness; mischievousness; nervousness; peevishness; restlessness; rudeness; being a poor sport; and inferiority complexes.

For the sake of discussing the faults that are more or less similar in behavior situation, let us classify them under the three following captions: (1) those faults occasioned by the child's

resentment at denial of an outlet for his impulses and energies; (2) those faults occasioned by the child's secretly trying to find an outlet of his own, and thus getting into trouble; and (3) those faults occasioned through lack of a positive program to develop specific virtues or the opposites of the faults.

WHAT UNDESIRABLE HABITS MAY BE OCCASIONED BY  
RESENTMENT AT BEING DENIED AN OUTLET  
FOR IMPULSIVE URGES?

Resentment against a parent often ensues when the child is not permitted to follow, in a way that would be right and proper, his impulsive urges. In such instances some of the following unwholesome responses are likely to result: arguing, contradicting, disrespect in some form, impudence, impoliteness, rudeness, stubbornness, peevishness, irritability, restlessness, teasing, and whining.

Adults do not realize how sensitive and responsive is the nervous organism of a healthy child, and how few mental interests he has to turn to as diversions, once his instinctive desires are thwarted; otherwise they would sense more keenly the almost unforgivable crime of denying children an outlet for their dynamic, pent-up energies. The little child responds wholeheartedly to a stimulus. When his carefully constructed block-wall suddenly caves in, he feels as though the whole world has tumbled. When he feels the hunger urge, he wants food at once. To adults his impatience is annoying; but adults do not always realize how habits of self-control are built up.

With the child, any stimulus sets off or releases boundless energies which tend to function in certain very definite ways. He has not learned to substitute another type of response; he does not have dozens of interests or major problems to fall back on; he has no built-up philosophy of life. In a very significant sense, every new interest acquired by the child is another means of learning self-control. For, new interests mean new outlets for the impulsive emotional life. These interests act as safety valves for the reflexive, organic, and impulsive urges. The adult controls



himself through these acquired interests. If one response to an impulsive urge is blocked, he merely substitutes another. But the child must be helped to build these substitute responses. Many interests may be developed early by exposing him to a rich and stimulating environment. Self-control, poise, and freedom from emotional moods and outbursts will come as a natural result. But to thwart consistently his instinctive urges is ruinous.

Any normal child will argue, contradict, or show some form of resentment toward parent or teacher, if he is denied in his environment an appropriate outlet for his energies and impulses. Parents and teachers should recognize the first appearances of such tendencies as indicating inadequacy of environment or as signifying that the child's innate needs are not being met. If the adult responds with flat refusals, gives no reasonable explanation for refusing requests, and provides no substitutes, he may expect to reap a harvest of arguing, impudence, disrespect, peevishness, whining, stubbornness, or rudeness.

#### WHAT UNDESIRABLE HABITS MAY BE OCCASIONED IN THE CHILD WHO SEEKS AN OUTLET FOR HIMSELF?

If the child is denied a satisfactory outlet for his impulsive urges, he will, in all probability, try to find another. The outcome is likely to be as varied as it is usually disastrous. Some of the more common forms of reprehensible conduct that often ensue when the child attempts surreptitiously to find an escape are: running away, disobedience, dishonesty, deceit, slyness, stubbornness, nervousness, mischievousness, cowardice, and poor sportsmanship.

When, through following their instinctive urges, children get into mischief and do damage, destroy or lose something in their escapades, fear at once seizes them. They expect punishment of some kind from their impulsive, unreasonable guardians. And to ward it off, they immediately resort to subterfuges, alibis, or even carefully planned lying. Fear, probably more than any other motive force, is the cause of dishonesty, lying, and blaming others. The child is discovered in mischief and blamed for it;

immediately, because of fear of punishment, he resorts to lying and deceit. Hence, aside from the property being damaged or destroyed and regulations broken by the child who secretly finds his own outlets, such evil habits as premeditated lying, unabashed denial of guilt, and the blaming of others are slowly but none the less surely built up. Had parents and teachers been sufficiently interested in child development or had they possessed an adequate knowledge of child psychology, such regrettable conditions need not have been brought about.

#### WHAT UNDESIRABLE HABITS MAY BE OCCASIONED BY LACK OF PROVISION FOR A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT?

Many faults owe their origin to the lack of a wholesome environment. There is always change of some kind; and if desirable habits are not developed through favorable opportunities to practice them, there is likely to be a vigorous crop of their opposites. Again, even the most aggressive children cannot long endure the ridicule, domineering attitude, or severe punishments which are apt to follow their attempts to find for themselves satisfactory outlets for their impulsive urges. Where no specific, positive program for the development of certain desirable character traits is provided, we find among the most frequently listed faults such undesirable types of conduct as: lacking in initiative, concentration, consideration, cooperation, independence, and stick-to-it-iveness; disregard of duties; selfishness; laziness; irresponsibility; and inferiority complexes.

But what else could one expect? How does one get his habits and emotionalized ideals, except through using with satisfaction certain situations in their life setting? Children, in such cases, are what they are because of their experiences. If we expect strong biceps and pectoral muscles, we at once provide an environment of experiences and exercises that will assure their development. If we sincerely and intelligently desire that our children develop such strong moral muscles as self-reliance, initiative, cooperation, industry, and stick-to-it-iveness, we will be just as zealous in providing an environment that will give them numerous

and varied opportunities to practice these traits. Moral muscles and bodily muscles are built in exactly the same way—through exercise.

A big part of the work of teachers and parents is providing a place for children to play, with tools and materials appropriate to their different age levels.<sup>1</sup> Such conditions will greatly minimize cases of arguing, disobedience, or stubbornness. Wholesome, stimulating situations for the child are his birthright. He has a right to develop his inborn tendencies into worthy abilities and desirable characteristics. At the same time he should be given an opportunity to face and accept responsibilities and should be encouraged to do his share toward making all cooperative enterprises a success. Only through such a positive program will the desirable characteristics be developed.

#### HOW DOES ENVIRONMENT AFFECT THE ABILITY TO THINK?

Teachers and parents may, in some cases, take exception to the program suggested in the preceding pages. They may contend that it is unwise, even perilous, to encourage children to develop initiative, to let them plan and execute projects, or to give them responsibilities, arguing that the immature judgment and the inability of children to think may lead to disastrous results. But why do children lack judgment? Why can't they think? In how many schools or homes are children daily challenged in their life situations to use their own judgment, to solve their own problems, actually to do some real thinking? Often young people have to leave home in order to find an opportunity of taking the initiative in managing their own lives or in standing on their own feet. Parents and teachers frequently do all the planning and make all the decisions; then they bemoan the fact that young people are so irresponsible. Undoubtedly part of the popularity of extra-curricular activities is due to the fact that here pupils can in part "run their own show." If 98 per cent of the people (as some estimate it) have neither the ability nor the inclination to think, who is to blame? Who set up, either in the home or the

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix for play material.

school, a stimulating environment for them when they were children?

Mr. Edison, when pressed for a statement as to the probable cause of the inability of thousands to think, and of their unwillingness to think, said:

I don't know whether the woeful failure of most people is due to faulty methods of teaching in our schools or not, but I am inclined to think it is. It seems to me that either the teachers are not practical or else the authorities do not furnish the right kind of practical books. The more experience I have with young men the more I am inclined to think that something serious is wrong with both our school and our college systems of education. The boys and girls are taught a lot of theories which they seem to learn by rote. At any rate, very few are taught to do any thinking of their own. I can very rarely find even a college graduate who can think to any purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Thinking takes place when there is a difficulty to be removed, a conflict to be settled, a problem to be solved. In short, reasoning is present whenever an adjustment is to be made that requires the use of higher intelligence. Adults live in a world that is constantly demanding adjustment. Many and new experiences bring many and new meanings which, in turn, demand mental activity. In a similar way, the child should be encouraged to use his mental powers. The child's learning to think, even his ability to think, differs from the adult's largely in degree, not in kind.

Children will become independent thinkers in the degree that they live in an environment which stimulates and encourages them to meet problems and to solve difficulties. Many of their attempts, of course, will be incomplete; many will be imperfect; but some will be successful. The result of these attempts will be an attitude of trying and an independent development of their mental life. When parents and boards of education and teachers become obsessed with a passion to make thinking, reasoning boys and girls, instead of eighth-grade and high-school graduates, great changes will be made in school buildings, equipment, subject mat-

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas A. Edison, "Why Do So Many Men Never Amount to Anything?" *American Magazine*, Vol. 91 (Jan., 1921), pp. 10-11.

ter, and method. The child has the capacity to develop independent thinking habits. It is only fair that the necessary stimulating situations be provided for him.

### WHAT CAN THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL DO NOW TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO THINK?

But parents and teachers must not fold their hands and wait for a millenium when conditions will be ideal. Rather must they go ahead and make possible adjustments forthwith. With very little effort, many advantageous situations which encourage thinking can be set up for the child. The following suggestions may be of help in attempting to provide the child with a stimulating, thought-provoking environment:

1. Observe and nourish the primordial characteristic of every animal—an urge to act. Through this impulsive tendency to be forever on the move the child meets new situations, gets broader meanings, and learns to make new adjustments.
2. Encourage by stimulation the activity of all his instinctive life. For example, he has native propensities for constructing, collecting, owning, creating, asserting, investigating, manipulating, imitating, and emulating. These tendencies constitute a *directive* urge that leads into enterprises, difficulties, and projects whose solution, in turn, means mental growth and the development of the ability to reason.
3. Provide for him a course of study made up of things to do, of creative activities that are within his experiences. The so-called knowledges and skills so carefully embalmed in his text books will then be learned as he needs them in order to succeed in his enterprises.
4. Give him many responsibilities, both at home and at school. Thus he will learn to share and cooperate in a democratic society.
5. Stimulate his propensities to achieve, to build, and to create. In the degree that the child is permitted to attack



his own problems and use his own ideas in solving them will he develop faith in himself. As he succeeds in solving his problems, he will learn to believe that "what man can conceive, man can achieve," and he will be led on and on into many forms of experience, from which will come fuller and richer meanings.

6. Help the child to many wholesome, first-hand experiences, for only in this way does one get his clearest and most accurate meanings from life. Then supply him with many analogous experiences, second-hand, through readings, pictures, stereopticon slides, etc.
7. Let the recitation period be one of assembling data, judging their value, and, from the facts in hand, making conclusions. In such instances, the children hold the center of the stage, the teacher acting as director and advisor only.
8. Correlate textbook information and supplementary reading with the creative activities of the school, the home, and the community.

In brief, if teachers and parents provide the child with activities that afford an outlet for his impulsive tendencies, that are within his ability to handle, and that he feels his playmates, teachers, and parents believe to be worth while, they have provided him with a laboratory that makes the intellectual achievements of reasoning and judging a possibility. In the appendix are listed some references which list wholesome suggestive activities as guides to thinking.

### CONCLUSION

1. The child is a bundle of energizing urges. The two principal sources from which the child gets his drive for mental and physical activity are:
  - (a) First, he is a young, growing, healthy physical organism, with a nervous mechanism highly sensitive, vibrant, and susceptible to any stimulus which will release its pent-up power for expression.

- (b) Second, the child is born with certain impulsive urges which are directive and demand an outlet in order to afford him satisfaction.
2. Few punishments are more cruel and uncalled-for than that of denying the child wholesome activities which will act as outlets for his incessant demands for action.
  3. The faults listed in this chapter probably all find their origin and much of their subsequent development in the denial of outlets to certain urges inherent in all healthy children.
  4. The child, if denied an outlet for his impulsive life, will seek one covertly. Here is sown the first seed of deception and shame. If his secrecy leads him into mischief, he will lie and blame others because of fear. If he is easily subdued, thus giving in to his repressive environment, he has lost many opportunities to learn self-reliance, straight thinking, perseverance, cooperation, and initiative.
  5. One of the dispositions and techniques which adult life most acutely needs is the ability to think and, before making a choice, to want to think one's life situations through. The number of adults is legion who suffer daily because, as children, they never had a chance to learn to think, and thus, never acquired the habit or disposition of evaluating their daily problems.

#### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

##### ARGUES, IS STUBBORN, CONTRADICTS

1. Could not arguing, contradicting, and stubbornness, in many instances, be classed as virtues rather than faults? Possibly any one or all three of these so-called faults are evidences of will power, courage, determination, initiative, and drive, which are greatly needed, both in children and adults.
2. Would not allowing your child to present his side of the case be helpful in his development? Do we not need strong, fearless, and self-confident people? Can children be trained for a democracy in an autocracy?
3. If the child is never allowed to argue or present his side

of the question, will he not in time develop either a meek, submissive, whipped attitude, or its opposite, a parent-hate, which may transfer itself to all governing bodies in adult life? Some psychiatrists believe that this resentment of parental tyranny often affects the emotional life of the child to the degree that it becomes a carry-over in the form of hatred toward anyone in authority.

4. Would the child's physical condition often aggravate these three faults? How much allowance shall be made for ill-health?
5. Could parents and teachers, by anticipating provocative situations, often prevent an outburst of these three faults? Why is it their duty to do so?
6. Does the child often capitalize his arguing, contradicting, and stubbornness to gain his own ends by wearing out the opposition? How can such a motive be wholesomely thwarted?
7. Would a keen sense of humor in the adult help the child to see the stupidity of his contention? Many times, being able to see the funny side of a situation relieves the tension, and, after a good laugh, the child is ready to listen to reason.
8. Are you certain that you know the motive that prompted your child to contradict or argue? Their childish reasons are often very significant to them.
9. Have you helped your child to see the difference between arguing and discussing?
10. Does your child have many interests or many opportunities to be wholesomely busy?
11. Are children born stubborn, or do they sometimes see stubbornness manifested in the adults with whom they live?
12. Is arguing, contradicting, or stubbornness often a defense reaction of the child who has failed? How can such defense reactions be eliminated?
13. Would it be possible for adults and children to live in such confidential, friendly relationships that all differences of opinion could be talked over deliberately and fully, each side being encouraged to have its full say?
14. Would it be possible for adults so to live among their children that, when time or some other equally vital factor did not permit a discussion of the issue, the confidence of the children in the sincerity and broadmindedness of the

adults would be such that they would yield gracefully, accepting without murmur the adult decision with the full realization that adequate reasons would be given later?

15. Can children be taught the difference between arguing and discussing, stubbornness and sincerity of conviction? Could they be helped to see that one is a despicable fault, the other a cardinal virtue?
16. Could adults and children adopt some standard means of settling disputes in which law, and not clashing personalities, would govern? (For instance, home room organization in school and home court in the home.)
17. Would it not be wise to ascertain all the causal factors operating in any instance of maladjustment before attempting to make a decision?

#### READS TOO MUCH

1. What other interests has the child?
2. Have you helped your child develop other equally attractive interests, such as music, several kinds of sports, nature study, camping, etc.?
3. What is he reading? Probably nothing so molds a child's life, especially an adolescent's, as the kind of material he habitually reads. (See list of books suggested in appendix.)
4. Do you talk over with him what he reads to make certain that he is getting correct notions about life?
5. Do you have a family reading hour? Does the family, gathered before the fire, enjoy reading aloud interesting books?

#### TALKS TOO MUCH, INTERRUPTS, INTERFERES

1. Are not all three of these faults simply the result of the overflow of youthful energy seeking outlets?
2. If these three traits are annoyingly chronic, would it not be well to make a diagnosis of the child's physical and mental condition?
3. Would lack of a happy, attractive, wholesome set of interests and activities be one cause of an abnormal display of these traits? Pent-up energies must have an outlet; if it is not a healthful one, it will be perverted.
4. Is the child practicing good health habits, in this way taking the first precaution against nervous instability?
5. Does he gain anything through a display of these traits? Is he bribed to keep quiet when company is present? Per-

haps he has learned that by such a display he can become the center of attention.

6. Would it not be fair to the child, and also a means of rectification, to take time daily to talk over with him his problems and attempt to answer his numerous questions? Children have a right to express their opinions and to seek information; and schools and homes should make adequate provision for them to exercise their right. The old adage, "Children should be seen and not heard" has too long held sway.
7. Could not the parents or teachers and the children talk over those situations and occasions, when forbearance from talking, interrupting, and interfering are really necessary? Would not giving the child reasons for keeping quiet, complimenting him when he does, helping him, with a "knowing wink" or smile, to control himself on occasions when he is about to forget—in short, making the building of personality an attractive, cooperative enterprise, be a most effective way of helping him overcome such an undesirable trait?
8. Would it not be helpful to explain to the child that, since he has his own play room in which he has many liberties, he should respect the liberties of others; that in the home and school of democracy all must cooperate and consider one another?



## CHAPTER VI

### THE EFFECT OF FAILURE UPON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

If a child flies into a rage when he fails in his conflicts with certain life situations, one frequently hears people say, "Poor child! It is too bad; but both his father and grandfather had such 'spells.' What else can one expect? He inherited them." Yes, in a very significant sense the child did inherit such tendencies, but not through germ plasm alone. He inherited an environment in which he was daily exposed to tantrums, spells, and phobias upon the part of adults when they failed. Those psychologists who facetiously say that one would have to begin with the grandfather to affect a cure in such an instance are not far from the truth. Through suggestion and imitation the child acquired these unhealthy emotional habits from his father who, in turn, had imitated his father. Not *biological* but *sociological* heredity should be the center of study for parents and teachers.

#### WHAT FAULTS MIGHT HAVE THEIR ORIGIN IN AN EARLY ENVIRONMENT OF FAILURE?

Character or personality is simply the result of interplay between biological heredity and environment. The interaction of these two entities causes certain adjustments to be made, certain habits, mental sets, traits, and accomplishments to be developed. In brief, the child's future happiness and success depend upon the many and varied adjustments that he makes to perplexing life experiences. If, for example, he is reared in a home where he hears a failing father bemoan his fate by denouncing everybody and life in general, if he is exposed to a mother whose manifestation in everything she says or does is one of fear, dejection, and inferiority of attitude, if he himself is bullied by older and

stronger brothers and sisters, he can scarcely escape having some of the following traits: cowardice, fear, supersensitiveness, timidity, daydreaming, cruelty, hate, sullenness, whining, pouting, stubbornness, self-consciousness, enviousness, lack of self-control, lack of confidence, lack of initiative, restlessness, dissatisfaction, irritability, unfriendliness, over-cautiousness, jealousy, destructiveness, and either self-pity or bullying.

Any one or all of the above twenty-five faults, and probably as many more allied ones, may have their origin and subsequent development in an environment where the child is exposed to confessions of failure upon the part of his parents, or where he himself experiences a series of rebuffs and failures in his own conflicts with reality. In this chapter we shall discuss the latter—the effect upon the child's character of his own failure.

Possibly a discussion of the child's attempts to conquer, to succeed, and to have his own way in his experiences with life from the moment of birth will explain sufficiently how his early acquisition of some of those twenty-five faults comes about.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ADJUSTMENTS THE CHILD FIRST LEARNS TO MAKE?

Children are always trying to adjust themselves in some way to life as they find it. They must make adjustments or perish. From the instant of birth the child is confronted by a reality that calls for adjustment of his nervous organism. For example, if he does not start to breathe at once, a few smart slaps from the doctor or nurse set his proper nervous mechanism (reflexes) to work. His emotional response to this first conflict between his ego and reality is crying. Soon he is wrapped in a soft, warm blanket, a reality that is very pleasant. He then responds by ceasing to cry, probably by going to sleep. From this first hour, life is made up of daily conflicts or battles between his ego (i. e., instinctive desires and habits), and his environment.

As the child grows older, his experiences with reality increase rapidly. The daily conflicts of the three-months-old baby, who cannot even turn over, are few compared to those of the nine-

months-old baby who crawls all over the house. All new and varied experiences are just so many clashes between his ego and his environment. The reactions that he makes to these life situations become his habits and attitudes—his adjustments. Fortunate indeed is that infant who is intelligently and sympathetically helped to understand himself and his environment, to the end that he learns to react in ways that are conducive to a happy, wholesome participation in his social group.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STEPS IN THE TRANSITION FROM EGOTISM TO ALTRUISM?

One often hears little children alluded to as rank, selfish, self-centered egotists. But to blame them for their egotism, or to speak of it in a caustic and unkind way, is as unintelligent as it is unfair. How could an infant escape being a self-centered egotist? His pre-natal wants were anticipated and supplied. In a new world, almost helpless in the combat with grim reality, how else could the organism show its needs or protest against neglect and irritations, except as it puts forth efforts in the way of crying, yelling, stiffening the limbs, slashing the arms about, etc.? Responses to these manifestations bring attention and comfort. No wonder the infant becomes a veritable despot!

The transition from love and consideration of self to love and consideration of others is a slow and painful process. But even in infancy the baby begins to learn through his experiences that he must now and then forego or postpone the gratification of his wishes. It may be that this first decisive experience comes about in some such way as the following. Between the fourth and fifth month, when he has learned to roll over and immensely enjoys turning over on the bed, he will not lie quiet while his mother dresses him. His impulse to roll and kick will brook no interference. But at this stage of the game, the mother properly administers a few slaps; and the child lies still. He is thus learning that his happiness can often be secured only by his conforming to the wishes of others. He is learning to consider others, because only in this way does he himself have comfort.

Soon some of his love—or rather, feelings of gratification—is transferred to his mother. She makes him happy because she satisfies his desires for food, rest, and comfort. His mother becomes his projected ego, his wish-fulfiller. His regard for others is probably next extended toward his father, who further gratifies his desires and wishes by carrying him or playing with him. By the end of the first year and a half the child is still very self-centered; but he has learned to consider others when to do so brings him satisfaction and comfort.

From this time on, older brothers and sisters, nurses, and parents refuse to respond so readily to his every whim and demand. Rapidly he learns that to get attention and love he must more and more forego the immediate gratification of his desires. He learns through experience that certain kinds of behavior or certain adjustments on his part beget smiles, loving acts, playthings, liberties, and food. Equally well he learns that other types of behavior are not tolerated but bring defeat, discomfort, and denial.

The jump between the selfish gratification of one's desires and the complete loss of self in the consideration of others is a long one. The progress from self-love to idealistic altruism, as expressed in the lives of the truly great, comes about because each succeeding stage of growth toward altruism yields greater satisfaction than the preceding selfish stage. There is no need of being ashamed of this natural selfish element in childhood. But children should be helped to make such happy adjustments in their conflicts with reality that they become tempered and refined, so that the highest ideals of living may be ultimately realized.

#### WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE EGO AND REALITY?

What then may we expect, if the natures of children are not directed in their innumerable contacts with reality? They will make adjustments, it is true, without guidance; but with what results? In some instances, the attempted adjustments will lead to worthy habits such as determination, truthfulness, industry,

and sympathy. But in other instances because of failure to make satisfactory, wholesome adjustments, there will be developed many pernicious traits, such as fear, jealousy, selfishness, cruelty, temper, and inferiority complexes. If the child's adjustments fit into the standards set by society, he is said to be normal; and he has a chance for success and happiness. But if they run counter to social standards, he is classed as abnormal; and he is doomed to unhappiness and failure.

Thus the future of the child depends upon the type of adjustment he learns to make to his varied and complex environment. The balanced personality or the strong character is the result of many wholesome adjustments, which have, in turn, developed well-organized attitudes and habits. In the daily conflicts between his ego and reality lies the opportunity for development. If satisfactory adjustments are made, growth, power, and stamina result.

The big opportunity and the primary obligation of parents and teachers are so to help the child in all these conflicts between his nature and environmental reality that he comes out stronger and happier than before the onset of the struggle. *Continual maladjustments* will invariably lead to such habits as going into tantrums or fits of rage, despair, jealousy, melancholia, or equally vicious but probably less emotional habits of stealing, lying, bluffing, blaming others, shifting responsibility, and ignoring reality. In brief, the child must be shielded, for the most part, from an environment in which he is continually losing in the struggle. Repeated, consistent failures result in attempts to save the "ego," and these attempts, in turn, are responsible for many of the undesirable types of behavior.

#### WHAT ARE THE PROBABLE CAUSES OF JEALOUSY?

Jealousy is a maladjustment early manifested in children. While, according to Watson, it is not a primitive emotion, yet the origin is evident. A child's ego or self comes into conflict with reality, possibly in the form of a new baby in the home. He is no longer the center of attraction. He does not get all the atten-



tion of his parents as he previously did. Possibly he does not even get his share. An intense emotional reaction, which is probably a mixture of love, fear, and rage, seizes him. The object of his rage is usually the innocent, new baby.

Such manifestations of jealousy are frequent and to be expected in the very young child. He craves attention; he often seeks the lime light. But his opportunities for winning praise are relatively few, and consequently he keenly resents praise being bestowed upon others. As the child learns to do things and has frequent chances to show his prowess along certain lines, there should be a gradual diminution of jealous displays.

But if the child is not given legitimate outlets for his desire to show what he can do, the situations which evoke demonstrations of jealousy become infinite and varied. He resents any evidence of favoritism to others in the home or school, feels keenly any results of conflicts which are discreditable to him, and becomes incensed and unhappy at the successes of his companions.

The results of these feelings of jealousy are obvious. Children often refuse to cooperate in some worthy enterprise, such as a school play, if the leading parts are allotted to others; if they cannot "shine," they will do all in their power to prevent others from doing so. Personal success and honor take precedence over school spirit. So pronounced does this brooding, jealous emotion become in some children that their feelings are turned inward, and definite undesirable, introvertive traits are developed. Inferiority complexes, indicated in sullenness and bitterness in adult life, often have their beginnings in the jealous responses of children.

Nor is adult life free from this unwholesome emotional response. We see it manifested in all vocations. The workman in the factory, the accountant in the bank, and the professor in the university may be alike resentful of promotions or honors that come to their co-workers; and they try in every conceivable manner to take the edge off their fellows' victories and to make life more difficult for them. Wherever one turns, one sees the lives of people embittered because of this infantile carry-over. Worthy causes and projects fail in many cases because people will not

cooperate in an enterprise that may bring honor to someone else, unless it entails greater glory for them. The successful leader is handicapped at every turn and doomed to have many merciless critics in the jealous aspirants for his position. Nor are the critics themselves happy. Jealousy, like a canker, eats into their innermost being, making them cynical, bitter, and morose.

### WHAT IS THE CURE?

How can these unhealthy, joy-killing emotional reactions of jealousy be uprooted? Our sole hope is in children. A general principle that all should keep in mind is that situations or stimuli that might evoke jealousy in children should be painstakingly avoided. Parents should guard against any indication of favoritism and should positively prohibit teasing. Just for the fun of seeing a child fly into a rage or become "green with envy," adults have been known deliberately to torment him by pretending to take some treasured toy or by making loving demonstrations over another member of the family.

Possibly by giving *every child a chance to succeed*, and by unstintingly praising his accomplishments, much can be done to thwart the development of jealous responses. It is difficult to rejoice over the conquests of another, if one never himself experiences the joy of success. But when a child succeeds and receives merited praise, he is in a mood to share in the successes of others.

Children should early understand that it is impossible to excel in everything and that every individual, when he does a creditable piece of work, has a right to honor and praise. The spirit of sharing and rejoicing in the accomplishments of others should be stressed in home and school. Children should have many opportunities to compliment their playmates on their achievement; and parents and teachers should lead the way by recognizing publicly the worthy efforts of every member of the group.

The American passion for "being first" or winning at all costs is pernicious. In athletic contests, children should be encouraged to play for the sake of the game, to beat their own record, not just

to rout the opponent. Emphasis should be placed on good, clean sportsmanship in which worthy accomplishments of either team should be wholeheartedly applauded.

If, in his early conflicts, the child learns to sympathize with his comrades in their failures and to rejoice with them in their successes, he is likely to attain adulthood unhandicapped by a personality which has been twisted and warped by jealousy.

#### WHAT ARE THE PROBABLE CAUSES OF DAYDREAMING AND PHANTASY?

Many children attempt to dodge or escape disagreeable realities by what is known as daydreaming. There is no denying the genuine pleasure that comes from living in a world of imagination where no grim, sordid reality comes to mar the joy of the pictured glory. In his world of imagination the dreamer is happy and victorious, no matter how dispirited or unsuccessful he may be in the world of fact and reality.

Daydreaming, within limits, has its advantages. It is the child's refuge, his method of saving his self-respect in a situation wherein reality would defeat him. With adults daydreams precede great accomplishments and serve to spur men on to further attempts, in spite of actual defeat. To re-live some victories and to look ahead and dream of future conquests are inspiring and encouraging. Daydreams are splendid forms of escape and rejuvenation, if the dreamer is quite aware that he is building castles in the air, if these imagined victories act as a spur to drive him on to make fancy a reality. No great work is accomplished without them.

But the danger of daydreaming, for either child or adults, is that it may become a habit, a definite way of escaping reality. Each time the child fails to meet a life situation squarely and takes shelter behind some imagined victory where, either by magic forces or peculiar imaginary twists of circumstances, he conquers, he is lessening his chances of winning the next real conflict. By dodging reality and possible defeat, he is losing his chance to see *why* he lost, wherein he is weak, or what principles should have been employed to win. What is more, he is losing

confidence in himself to face future struggles. He is probably getting greater present satisfaction from his daydreaming. This may lead to advanced forms of phantasy, indulgence in which will render him helpless as a practical worker.

For phantasy is but an exaggerated form of daydreaming wherein the patient loses control of the situation, *viz.*, the will and the ability to see the difference between the fanciful and the realistic elements in a situation; he involuntarily goes off into a dream state whenever he is confronted by a real job, struggle, or disagreeable experience.

The daydreams of children should be watched carefully and intelligently. Aside from the possibility of their leading to phantasies, they are apt to develop such faults as lack of confidence; breakdown of self-control; cowardice; timidity; over-worked imagination; lack of industry, self-reliance, and perseverance.

Children may be protected by being helped to win in their conflicts with reality. In some instances where the child habitually takes refuge from defeat in daydreaming, easy situations which make success and victory a surety should be set up. After a child has won a few real victories in his spelling, geometry, or theme writing, he will turn away from daydreaming. The artificial glamour of make-believe conquests pales into insignificance compared to the joy that comes from winning real battles.

Helping the child to analyze the conditions that made for success and those that caused failure will further aid him. The child must win more battles than he loses. As an outlet for impulsive tendencies an environment which leads to habitual failure possibly works greater harm than does the most barren environment.

#### HOW DOES RATIONALIZING RESULT FROM CONFLICTS WITH REALITY?

Another defense reaction or method of trying to escape reality and truth is known as rationalizing. It may be defined as the inventing of excuses for doing as we did or as we want to do. In short, it is simply finding excuses for our actions, and alibis for our failures.

In children, it takes the form of excuse-making and the blaming of others. The child says he failed to be promoted because "the teacher had it in for him." The girl declares it was her brother's fault that the dish dropped, because he was teasing her. With adults, this "infantile carry-over" of finding excuses, quibbling, and arguing is probably one of the most contemptible and yet one of the most common weaknesses. There is no need to cite illustrations. We have all seen scores of adults who did not wish to admit defeat or feared to face real issues in a problem. Their alibis are numerous and ingenious.

Why do children rationalize? It is probably because, by so doing, they save their pride or their ego. They do not want to admit failure; so they build up excuses for their defeat. But this tendency to rationalize should be nipped in the bud, for it undoubtedly leads to such undesirable habits as arguing, bluffing, blaming others, making alibis, selfishness, egotism, self-satisfaction, vanity, and dishonesty. It is essential that children early learn to face reality and accept the results of their own mistakes.

Teachers and parents may help the child overcome the habit of rationalizing by appealing to his pride and courage and by making much of his success in overcoming temptations. They should help him to be fair and open-minded in all his conflicts. Out of his life experiences will come many opportunities to practice facing a problem. At such times encouragement and the citing of examples of heroic men and women who dared to face reality will stimulate him to successful effort. Many a child does not realize how hateful and cowardly rationalizing is until he sees examples of it in his associates, or is helped to analyze the conditions of his own refusal to face reality.

#### HOW ARE CERTAIN INFERIORITY ATTITUDES OCCASIONED AND REMOVED?

Children who are not intelligently helped in their battles between their wants and notions on the one hand, and social demands on the other, often lose more battles than they win. If, in addition to their defeats, a spanking is added for failure to



meet the social standards, the repressed, whipped, or inferiority attitude is likely to show up.

Feelings of inferiority come very early in child life. These feelings may increase in number and virulence throughout life, making one unsuccessful, unhappy, and ultimately a decided failure. There are many causal factors operating to develop feelings of inferiority in the child, chief of which is his recognition of his own insignificance and helplessness physically, intellectually, socially, and industrially, when compared with adults. The child soon realizes that he cannot do adult's work, cannot command their wages, cannot cope with them in contests or enter into their liberties. Daily he attempts to emulate the deeds of older brothers, sisters, or associates; and, when he fails because of lack of strength, developed skills, or foresight, he very probably secretly chides himself for being less than they. So the inferiority attitude develops.

Two little girls, aged two and five, were playing in the yard. For five minutes the conversation took the form of a monologue by the older child: "*You* can't do this. [Climbs up on a city hydrant some three feet high.] *I* can run faster than you. *You* can't climb up here; *I* can; you're too little. *I'm* taller than you. *I'll* be five years old next Saturday; *you* are only two; *I'll* be a big mamma when *you* are just going to school. *My* dress is pink; yours isn't. *My* brother has a Lindbergh cap; he has a Babe Ruth ball and bat, too; *yours* hasn't."

To all this raillery the little two-year-old had to listen. She attempted to climb the hydrant but, not being strong enough, compromised and saved her "ego" by climbing into the other little girl's wagon. When she refused to get out, screamed, and made a scene, the older girl let her stay, probably fearing the interference of the mother, who might come out and show her superior power and strength by helping her two-year-old. In another year, this same little two-year-old will be lording it over her baby sister. Her ego, pride, self-respect, and feeling that she is of some consequence will, in part by this means, be saved.

Even in adults one sees many demonstrations of this inferiority

sense and ego in "showing off," "four-flushing," "grand-standing," bragging, and boasting. Possibly they do not know that they are suffering from inferiority of ego; but their associates are often exasperated by its manifestations.

How did we acquire this inferiority complex? It is more or less common to most of us. It is early found in childhood; and it is probably the most pronounced "infantile carry-over" to adult life that we have. Some writers have declared that Jesus alone, in all history, seems to have been devoid of it. He always adjusted himself to any situation in a manner that showed that He was over-awed neither by what others said or did, nor by any great feelings within Himself.

There are divers ways in which we acquire these inferiority attitudes. For example, children who are reared in homes where father or mother daily exhibits or confesses failure in conflicts with life would certainly be affected. These moods of parents are often the most pronounced influence and stimuli that affect the child. Moreover, the child lives in a complex, high-tensioned social order, where he hears constantly reiterated the envious ambition of those about him to become kings of finance and of industry or queens of beauty or of the movies with abundance of power, prestige and luxury. Parents and teachers, instead of pointing out to the child the joy and supreme satisfaction of developing his own emotional and intellectual life, too commonly hold before him some false ideal of "greatness." When he begins to compare his physique, family, financial standing, training, and abilities with some big idol, whether it be a movie star, prize fighter, scientist, musician, or great preacher, his own failings, weakness, and immaturities at once seem overwhelming.

Too often, in facing reality, even with a courage that is indomitable, the child is doomed to lose in the conflict, because he lacks intelligent directing and sympathetic but wise analyses of his defeats and victories. Early manifestations of inferiority are often seen in fits of sulkiness, pouting, shyness, stubbornness, irritability, braggadocio, flippancy, boldness, egotism, and sham-aggressiveness. Silence and shyness are also other defense habits

formed to hide this feeling of inferiority. Through resorting to them, the child escapes reality and conflicts. If there is no conflict, there is no danger of defeat, hence no humiliation.

The place of the teacher and the parent in the rectification of these unhealthy emotional adjustments is evident. They should help the child make wholesome adjustments to his daily conflicts. They should help him plan projects *that are possible of achievement*, that are within his reach. It is not to be expected or desired that he will win all his battles, because defeats are sometimes more stimulating than victories; but it is to be expected that parents and teachers will see to it that the children are in the main stronger and better after each conflict. Confidence, hope, faith in self, and desire to achieve should never be crushed in children. It is right that each child should feel that, in a sense, he fills a place that no other can fill quite so well. The child has a right to his "place in the sun." Therefore he should frequently be placed in situations that will give him an opportunity to show what he can do, to make his contribution to the sum total of human achievement.

#### WHAT CHARACTER TRAITS ARE INHERENT IN THE INTROVERT AND THE EXTROVERT?

Introversion and extroversion are terms which represent two different and opposite emotional types of response which children exhibit in facing a situation. Possibly an example will best indicate the characteristics of each type. Two children are playing with a pup in the yard. A stranger comes along who not only pretends he wants the pup but makes advances to take it. Notice the emotional responses of the two children.

The extrovert directs his emotionally aroused energy toward the external object in the conflict, namely, the stranger. These releases of energy are evidenced in his loud protests, his struggles with the man for possession of the dog, his kicks at and threats to attack his adversary.

The introvert's behavior is just the reverse. His emotionally aroused energies are just as deep and urgent as the other's; but,

instead of being directed toward the external object, the stranger, they are inhibited and directed inwardly. He retreats somewhat from the scene of conflict and watches the man covertly. His emotions dissipate themselves in visceral and glandular reactions. The child suffers intensely. He is literally being torn to pieces with surging, seething, pent-up emotions.

The investigation of Marston on extrovert and introvert types is a real contribution to child study. The subjects in his investigation were 100 children between two and six years of age. Various means were used to ascertain whether introvertive or extrovertive traits predominated in these children. Of the several means employed by Dr. Marston in his determining of the introvert and extrovert types, a rating scale of twenty paired traits seemed most successful.

Concerning this scale of traits, Marston writes:

In terms of these traits the subject is described by a simple scheme of scoring. In this final form the scale has proved to be a reliable rating instrument, unique in type, easy of application, and definitely diagnostic of introversion and extroversion. The scale is here reproduced with the descriptions of traits of extroversion starred.<sup>1</sup>

#### TRAITS

INTROVERT	EXTROVERT
Is self-conscious; easily embarrassed; timid or "bashful."	*Is self-composed; seldom shows signs of embarrassment; perhaps is forward or "bold."
2. Avoids talking before a group; when obliged to talk before a group, finds it difficult.	*Eager to express himself before a group; likes to be heard.
3. Prefers to work and play alone; tends to avoid group activities.	*Prefers group activities, work or play; not easily satisfied with individual projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie R. Marston, "The Emotions of Young Children. An Experimental Study in Introversion and Extroversion," pp. 19-23, University of Iowa Studies, 1925.

4.

Not insistent upon the acceptance of his ideas and plans; agrees readily with others' wishes; compliant and yielding.

\*Insistent upon the acceptance of his ideas and plans; argumentative and persuasive.

5.

Inclines toward activities requiring care; good in details; "careful."

\*Prefers activities demanding pep and energy, but not exacting care; perhaps is neglectful of details.

6.

Deliberative; slow in making decisions; perhaps even on minor matters, overly cautious.

\*Impetuous and impulsive; may plunge into situations where forethought would have deterred him.

7.

Rather indifferent to external events; tends to detachment from environment.

\*Keenly alive to environment, physical and social; live curiosity.

8.

Lacking in self-confidence and initiative; a follower.

\*Self-confident and self-reliant; tends to take success for granted; strong initiative; prefers to lead.

9.

Reserved and distant except to intimate friends; does not form acquaintanceships readily.

\*Hearty and cordial, even to strangers; forms acquaintanceships very easily.

10.

Tends to depression; frequently gloomy or moody.

\*Tends to elation of spirits; seldom gloomy or moody.

11.

Very sensitive and easily "hurt"; reacts strongly to praise or blame.

\*Rather insensitive and indifferent to others' opinions; independent.

12.

Worries over possible misfortunes; "crosses bridges before coming to them."

\*Not given to worry or anxiety; carefree.



- Shows preference for a narrow range of intimate friends, and tends to exclude others from his association.
13. \*Seeks broad range of friendships; not selective or exclusive in games, etc.
- Slow in movement; deliberate or perhaps indecisive; energy output moderate or deficient.
14. \*Quick and decisive in movement; pronounced or excessive energy output.
- Shrinks from making new adjustments; prefers the habitual to the stress of reorganization required by the new.
15. \*Adaptable to new situations; makes adjustments readily; welcomes change.
- Marked perseveration tendency; does not abandon an activity readily regardless of success.
16. \*Turns from one activity to another in rapid succession; slight perseveration tendency.
- Emotions not freely or spontaneously expressed.
17. \*Emotions such as sympathy, delight, sorrow, anger, jealousy, etc., readily expressed.
- Secretive; seclusive and "shut-in"; not inclined to talk unless spoken to.
18. \*Frank; talkative and sociable; does not stand on ceremony.
- Often represents himself at a disadvantage; modest and unassuming; under-estimates his own abilities.
19. \*Makes the best appearance possible; inclined to "bluff" or "show off"; perhaps conceited.
- Does not pass quickly from elation to depression; constancy of mood.
20. \*Frequent fluctuations of mood; tends to frequent alternation of elation and depression.

In order that rating of children be just and unbiased, the following suggestions were made:

Consult no one in forming your judgment; what is desired is your estimate of the subject uninfluenced by what others may think of him.

Keep the subject in complete ignorance of the fact that he is being rated. In no case should he be informed of his rating, though it is favorable.

In rating the subject on a particular trait, disregard every other trait but that one. Many ratings are worthless because the rater has been influenced by a general impression he has formed of the subject, favorable or unfavorable. Especially is it important that one guard against bias in rating an intimate friend or in rating self.<sup>2</sup>

#### HOW EARLY IN LIFE DO EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT CHARACTERISTICS APPEAR?

Concerning the significance of early attention to these two emotional types, Marston writes:

This investigation has proved that children long before the normal age of school entrance, even as young as two and three years, have already developed characteristic attitudes of introversion and extroversion toward certain significant situations. While the province of this study has not been to determine the relative superiority of either type, the introvert or the extrovert, either in general or in specific traits, nor to devise methods of modifying the child's characteristic attitude, the desirability of ascertaining the young child's type tendency as a guide to his later emotional and social training is clearly implied in both the theoretical assumptions and the experimental results. The very descriptions of the particular traits with which this investigation has been concerned concretely involve educational objectives with which educators must reckon who would base the educative program on child nature.<sup>3</sup>

#### HOW CAN EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT TRAITS BE MODIFIED?

After a careful perusal of the characteristic traits of the extrovert and the introvert, it is evident that neither type represents the ideal. The extrovert type has many qualities that would cause followers to desert him in any great cause, although his

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 19-23. <sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 94.

sincerity might make him willing to forfeit his life. He would be lacking in some of the modesty, fairness, and thoroughness of the introvert. On the other hand, the decided introvert would also be likely to fail, lacking as he does initiative, drive, and confidence. What we want is a balance between introversion and extroversion—the child who possesses the desirable characteristics of both, without the faults of either.

Once having classified our children, how can we get this balance? The child will best develop the desirable characteristics through his everyday conflicts. We must set up life situations and conditions that will bring the introvert out, that give him a chance to shine, to excel, to win battles. He must be encouraged to take the leading role in little plays and projects; he must be encouraged to mix and hold his own with the extrovert child; and, above all, he must realize that he is winning in his battles.

With the extrovert, almost opposite tactics should be used. He must be held back, given minor parts in cooperative programs, placed in difficult situations where he fails once in a while. He must be placed in situations where he feels the need of the help of others, thus realizing that he is not sufficient unto himself, that life is a social, cooperative game. He must not be inhibited to the degree that he becomes discouraged; but he must be tempered.

Epigrammatically speaking, we may say: “push the introvert; check the extrovert.” Let the extrovert sit on the sidelines and watch the introvert excel. Set up situations which will give each type of child an opportunity to practice the traits he most needs for a wholesome, happy, balanced personality. It is normally adjusted boys and girls that we need. And the real test of a normal individual is whether he *can* and *will* make social adjustments easily.

#### WHAT ARE SOME INFERIORITIES EXHIBITED BY ADULTS?

How many maladjustments does the average adult make? The number is legion. It would take a brave and balanced man to

withstand the shock, if the nakedness of his soul were revealed by some expert making a dispassionate analysis of the motives which prompt his daily reactions. Such an analysis would reveal that many of our best and leading citizens daily exhibit some of the following weaknesses: selfishness, ignoring or refusing to face reality, susceptibility to flattery, jealousy, hatred, vanity, conceit, unwillingness to confess a weakness or mistake, basing judgments upon prejudices rather than upon facts; and they show themselves hypercritical of superiors, overbearing to subordinates, and possessed of divers, unreasonable fears. Where did the adult get these blemishes? In a very significant sense, they are, for the most part, "carry-overs" from childhood.

These childish maladjustments and the slants they give to adult behavior are strikingly set forth by Watson:

Once again may I reiterate a thought often expressed before in these lectures? If from morning till night the average adult could chart in detail his verbal, manual and visceral behavior which is released by infantile carry-overs, he would be not only astonished but even fearful of his future. Our "feelings are hurt," we "grow angry," we "become exasperated," we "handed someone a good one," we "got in a good lick at someone"; the man over you is "stupid," "ignorant," you quarreled, you "blew up," you got sick, you had a headache, you had to show off before your subordinate, you were sulky, moody, abstracted all day. Your work did not go well, you fumbled your work, spoiled your material. You were cruel to those below you, you were "conceited"—one of the almost inevitable forms of display. "Conceit," which all too often mars personality, is but a confession of the grossest kind of ignorance. A person who is wise always has such a vista of things he knows nothing about in front of him that he grows more and more humble as his wisdom increases. Conceit comes from infant spoiling. Humility and inadequacies are similarly carry-overs and are bred in usually by an "inferior" or inadequate father or mother. Slants of the parents in these directions account so well for the so-called "dispositional" factors in families (I mean the slants that can be seen through several generations) that I cannot see why we have to fall back upon inheritance to account for them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (W. W. Norton Co., 1925), pp. 241-2.

## CONCLUSION

1. Our "inferiorities" which exhibit themselves daily in so many deplorable ways, making for our half-successes and the misery of others, have largely been acquired as a result of frequent failures in childhood.
2. These inferiorities and their train of undesirable traits could have been forestalled in early life had parents and teachers provided the child an environment in which he succeeded.
3. The child's ego must be saved. He must win, for the most part, in his lessons, play, and work, both at home and at school, if there are to be developed such traits as self-reliance, courage, initiative, poise, perseverance, and self-control.
4. If the child does fail at times, there should be a compromise on the victory side. He should be helped to analyze his defeats, all for the purpose of insuring his success in his succeeding conflicts or at least of making a showing creditable to himself.
5. Children having marked introvertive traits should be given special attention. These tendencies are more than likely to lead to certain maladjustments later. The introvert needs a series of successes which will bring him out, which will cause him to express with success and satisfaction his pent-up urges. It may be necessary to provide a series of easy conflicts in which the introvert succeeds. After a few victories, more difficult situations can be assigned.
6. One curse of the age is that certain false standards are so idolized that the youth feels that unless he attains them he has failed. Such a false standard is the one that unless a girl marries she misses the whole of life. Many women as teachers, nurses, and workers in the various fields of human activity are doing an infinitely greater piece of service for the race and are happier in that



service than many who are married. Some other bogies or false standards are: "trying to be pretty," "to be a movie star," "to be the most popular," "to be champion" in everything undertaken. Parents and teachers should early stress the fact that each child can probably be a champion or a near-one in some one or a few things, but that it is being happy and helpful in all walks of life that counts most.

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

#### SLOW IN DRESSING, SLOW TO ACT, PROCRASTINATES

1. Is not slowness often an inherent trait, a nervous predisposition, or kind of physiological neural mechanism?
2. Is slowness to act a failing, except when it is caused by fear or a feeling of inferiority bordering on cowardice?
3. If a child is too slow in his actions or in his class work for his own good, will it help him at all to be telling him always of his handicap and comparing him with speedier children?
4. Are you certain that you understand your child's native gifts and will thus be in a position later to direct him into a vocation wherein his particular traits will be assets?
5. If the child is unduly slow in dressing, does he suffer for it? Is annoyance attached to his slowness? Does he miss going in the car with his father, or going with the gang because he dressed too slowly?
6. Have you taught the child how to arrange his clothes, on going to bed, so that his dressing in the morning is a systematic, standardized piece of work? Children enjoy seeing how time may be saved by the elimination of certain unnecessary movements.
7. Do you help him to make a game of dressing by racing with him for a few mornings?
8. Do you and the child agree upon some specific time limit for dressing, say fifteen minutes, and then stick to it? Does he enjoy seeing if he can beat that record?
9. If the child is persistently slow in dressing, in spite of positive plans to help him, would it be effective to talk the matter over with him, explaining the disastrous outcomes of letting such a habit grow on him, and then to get him to agree to some such plan as the following: For every minute overtime he takes in dressing he is to re-

- ceive one cut with the razor strap or he is to have one penny (or nickel) deducted from his weekly allowance? Children and adults all need some "tonic" at times to help them perfect and maintain certain desirable practices.
10. Is the child continually procrastinating—always just going to do the thing when he is reminded of it?
  11. Is he allowed to suffer because of his procrastinating? Sometimes the natural punishment that follows a misdemeanor is most effective. For example, if he does not come when dinner is called, do you ever let him take his time and then eat what he can find in the icebox when the meal is over?
  12. Do you give him chores that bring victory and reward when he finishes them in record time?

#### TEASING AND BULLYING

1. Are not teasing and bullying simply undesirable ways in which the child satisfies his ego, or compensates for his feeling of inferiority? Those older than he are continually bossing him around.
2. If teasing and bullying are defense reactions for his inferiorities, should not parents and teachers provide situations in which he will win and conquer but which will work no injury to the nerves of some younger child?
3. In how many homes and schools is the child daily made to feel the importance of his presence, the indispensability of his help and cooperation?
4. Would it help the child to explain to him how his teasing and bullying may affect the temper, disposition, and general attitude of his little brother or sister?
5. Would it help the child to appeal to him to give his little brother, sister, or friend a square deal? Older children like to be treated as grown-ups; hence they welcome confidences, responsibilities, and cooperative adult enterprises.
6. Does the child who teases have many outside, wholesome, absorbing interests? Teasing represents a craving for some outlet. Having things to do is just an escape valve for potential trouble; hence every new interest of the child is simply another means of self-control or security against troublesome conflicts.
7. Does the child tease and bully because he wants excitement or in order to become the center of attraction? Could other outlets be found for these urges?

8. Are you sure that you, some relative, or nurse maid have not teased and bullied the child in the past, so that now he gets satisfaction in making someone else suffer and feel humiliated, or that he accepts these two practices as being the vogue?
9. Would his being sick, discouraged, tired, or exhausted provoke a teasing attitude?
10. Would pointing out that teasing and bullying were infantile and not practiced by well-balanced grown-ups help him to desist?
11. Would anticipation of situations likely to bring about teasing and bullying, together with reasoning out and substituting a better and bigger way to show one's superiority, be a good antidote for these two inferiorities?

#### JEALOUSY AND ENVY

1. How many parents and teachers realize that jealousy probably causes more evil thinking, feeling, and acting than any other single fault?
2. Does jealousy lead to hatred, anger, anxiety, loss of self-control, and sometimes even to complete mental and physical breakdowns?
3. Is jealousy a form of self-love?
4. Does jealousy cause a child to become secretive, sullen, shy, or morose, because he feels that no one cares for him?
5. Do parents and teachers guard themselves against showing favoritism? These unfortunate favorites are often made very unhappy because of the jealousy of their playmates.
6. Can little children be taught to think of the new baby as "their baby," vying with the parents in trying to make him happy? Do thoughtless adults often sow seeds of jealousy by such remarks as, "Is Tommy jealous of the baby?" "Does he feel that his nose is broken?" etc.?
7. Do we not, in this age, put too much emphasis upon "being first" and give too much credit and honor to those coming first, often when there is only a very slight difference in scores? Does such emphasis not develop feelings of anger and inferiority in the 99 per cent who get no prize? Would it not be better to set up standards of excellence and give a reward of honor to all who achieve this standard? Would not such a program inhibit somewhat the formation of jealous attitudes?

## DISOBEDIENCE AND SLOWNESS TO OBEY

1. Should many commands be given, several of which you never expect the child to obey? Or should only a few be given and obedience to these strictly enforced?
2. When one makes a command, shall the child's physical condition be considered? For example, would his being sleepy, tired, exhausted in nerve energy, half-sick, or discouraged affect his behavior?
3. Should one always expect instant obedience in a child? Are they not, more often than adults, 100 per cent engrossed in some play or creative activity which would make the "drop and run" type of obedience a possibility only because an emotionalized fear of punishment possessed the child and prompted obedience rather than love?
4. Will nagging, threatening, and scolding do anything except make for continued disobedience and negligence?
5. Do you always keep your promises to the child, or do you explain very clearly when you have to break them? Maybe he is old enough to conclude that breaking promises is all right at times.
6. Are you certain that he always understands your directions or requests?
7. Are you certain that you know the motives that prompted him to disobey? Often children may have a worthy reason for not following your suggestions to the letter.
8. Do you give commands which are contrary to child-nature such as, "Don't you move"; "Keep absolutely quiet"?
9. Are you inconsistent in your commands and punishments, being one day very strict and the next day very lax?
10. Are you certain that your commands will not raise an unnecessary issue? Would thinking of the probable outcomes of some commands help at all?
11. Do you let the child tease or coax you into ignoring your commands?
12. Does the child sometimes disobey you in order to create excitement, to become the center of attraction? Why not provide wholesome outlets for his energies?
13. In cases of deliberate disobedience, would not an attitude of self-control, talking it over, and reasoning often have a more desirable effect on the child than bodily punishment, provided he is old enough to understand and to be reasoned with?

14. If some sort of punishment is to follow his disobedience, would it be more effective if the adult and the child, on the basis of similar experiences, could agree upon some sort of punishment or demerit so that when punishment does come, he feels that it is the result of his misdemeanor and a just outcome, rather than the expression of the displeasure of an irate parent or teacher? Children have been known to be more severe and more consistent in inflicting punishment upon themselves than their parents would have been.
15. Should commands be positive? For example, "Son, will you please beat that drum outdoors," instead of the usual, "Quit pounding that drum at once."
16. Should your children be told many times daily how pleased you are with their cooperation, obedience, help, and thoughtfulness? Can we give too much praise for good conduct?



## CHAPTER VII

### THE EFFECT OF UNFAVORABLE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ON EMOTIONAL HABITS

**The source of adult mental breakdowns.** Is there any connection between the unhealthy, distraught, emotional habits acquired in childhood and later adult insanity, crime, delinquency, dependency, and unhappiness? Regarding mental breakdowns, Dr. Frankwood E. Williams states:

There are 50,000 each year who are new patients. That is, these are persons who never before have been in a hospital for mental disease, except possibly as visitors, the number not including those who have been readmitted to the hospital with the return of a former illness. Neither does it include the mentally defective and the epileptic, nor does it include that much larger group of persons incapacitated with what is more comfortably called nervous disease—hysteria, neurasthenia, “nervous prostration,” “overwork,” and the like to distinguish it from the more vulgar mental disease. And, of course, it does not include anything like all those who suffer from frank mental disease. It includes, of this group, only those whose conduct was so unusual or bizarre that a lay judge who just the hour before had been arranging some intricate matters of probate—in which he is really quite expert—could see that the patient was “not right” and so granted a hospital *permission to receive him*. The action of the judge, note, is not to grant permission to a sick man to receive treatment at a public hospital but permission to the hospital to take away the man’s liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Many of these cases are apparently cured; many more are so improved that they can be sent home; but thousands are doomed and never recover mental health.

Some of the more discouraging factors which continually disturb the psychiatrist in these hospitals for the insane are: (1) this

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<sup>1</sup> Frankwood E. Williams, M. D., *Community Responsibility in Mental Hygiene* (The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., 1925), pp. 3-4.

army of wrecked lives is increasing in number each year; (2) most of these patients are brought to the hospital when the maladjustments are so far advanced that permanent cure or satisfactory improvement is almost impossible; and (3) the problem is being attacked at the wrong end of the line. Remedial measures should be taken in childhood, when unhealthy, emotional reactions are in the formative stage.

### HOW SIGNIFICANT IS THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF THE CHILD?

Studies in the field of mental hygiene indicate clearly that nervous and mental disease, dependency, and delinquency are to a larger extent than has been supposed merely different manifestations of the same thing—failure to make satisfactory adjustments to life situations which all must face daily. These failures in adjustment are due to unhealthy and pernicious emotional habits which have become fixed and integrated traits in personality and character; they are not acquired in adult life; they are, for the most part, “carry-overs” of wrong, sickly, and distorted emotional reactions of childhood.

Sometimes these unhealthy emotional habits in childhood are not recognized by parents and teachers who live daily with the children. Or, if they are noticed, it is thought that the children will get over them as they do the mumps and measles. But distraught, emotional outbursts continue to grow in strength until adjustment to trying situations in adult life is practically impossible. To such an adult, life is but a series of rebuffs, misunderstandings, near failures, and defeats. Finally, the crisis comes; there is a break which friends term a “sudden illness.” But psychiatrists have unravelled too many of these “tangled lives” to believe that the illness was sudden. They know that the breakdown has been developing over a long period of years, in all likelihood from early childhood.

**The source of juvenile and adult crime.** The explanation of much of our juvenile and adult delinquency is found in the distorted emotional life whose foundation is laid in childhood. The feeling of inferiority in a child often becomes so overwhelming

that he resorts to crime in a compensatory effort to overcome this feeling of inadequacy.

Daily living means for the child daily competing and comparing with others in his group. Out of this struggle comes either success or failure, feelings of superiority or inferiority. Unfortunate is that child who does not win the esteem of his group, and thus come to have a healthy emotional glow of self-confidence. Too often, because of some environmental factor or physical defect, the child does not win this cherished recognition.

Regarding the significance of these points, Dr. Frederick H. Allen, director, Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, writes:

Failure to attain this self-respect and self-confidence usually leads to the development of unhealthy compensatory activity which, if not corrected, may form the basis for a criminal career or for one of the various nervous and mental disorders.

This process is related to delinquency in that delinquency is one of the common forms of compensatory effort made by individuals to overcome some of their handicaps. In analyzing the histories of sixty stealing cases studied in the child-guidance clinic, it was found that in nearly half of them the stealing and associated activity were related definitely to feelings of inadequacy which had their roots in various factors in the life situation of the child. Common among these factors were physical characteristics which stamped the individual as being different, such as obesity, speech defects, undersize; mental defects of varying degrees; certain habits such as enuresis and masturbation; racial prejudices; presence of more attractive and gifted brothers and sisters; immorality and desertion of parents; economic factors; failure to achieve a healthy emancipation from parents; and repressive discipline.<sup>2</sup>

Child failure is much more significant than adult failure. Dr. Bernard Glueck writes:

If the grown-up individual fails as a husband, he can find compensation in success as a business man, or in being a jolly good fellow, or what not. The fact is that adulthood offers much greater variety of outlets than does childhood. If a child fails as a pupil or as an obedient son or daughter, there is hardly an

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick H. Allen, M. D., "Psychic Factors in Juvenile Delinquency," *Mental Hygiene* (Vol. XI, 1927), pp. 764-74.

avenue left through which he may find the compensatory stimulus of success, unless it be as a successful rebel or dodger. Indeed, many of the behavior difficulties of childhood can be explained on this basis to a very large extent.<sup>3</sup>

**The source of general inefficiency.** Let us forget for a moment the sickly, motley array of half-wrecked humanity that may be seen in hospitals for the insane, penitentiaries, jails, reformatories, poor houses, charitable institutions, and juvenile courts. Let us observe supposedly normal people. Note how they have blundered, making themselves and their dearest companions unhappy and miserable. Observe how often they have been misunderstood, have wasted or used uneconomically their energies, have waged a losing battle or succeeded only in part in the profession or business, and have failed to get their rightful share of joy out of life's everyday activities. Did these so-called normal people inherit from some ancestor, through the germ plasm, the tendencies that permanently reduced their success and happiness to a minimum? Are people born queer, or does environment help make them that way? Are not all habits, both intellectual and emotional, learned and acquired as a result of life experiences?

Some attention, of course, must be given to the unfortunate army of mental and moral derelicts in asylums and penitentiaries; but it is really the 98 or 99 per cent of "normal" humanity for whom most can be done. Parents and teachers should focus their efforts on the normal child, helping him in his daily conflicts to make adjustments that will lead to a happy, successful adulthood.

### OF WHAT VALUE IS PERSONALITY?

Who can estimate the value of a poised, emotionally-controlled personality as a factor in the successful pursuit of one's business, trade, profession, or vocation in life? Some people consider the ability to get along with people as constituting at least 50 per cent of one's market value in any sphere. Teaching, medicine, law, engineering, farming, home-making, nursing, stenography,

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard Glueck, M. D., "Constructive Possibilities of a Mental Hygiene of Childhood," *Mental Hygiene* (Vol. VIII, 1924), pp. 649-667.

and business require trained minds; but they need *trained personality* too. They demand men and women who can get along with one another; they demand men and women who can stand ridicule and criticism, who can persevere in the face of jealousy and friction, who will not wilt under discouragement, or flare up in anger. In short, the skill of the mechanical or professional artisan constitutes only about 50 per cent of his market value; the other 50 per cent is made up of temperamental characteristics, native and acquired. It is a popular delusion that if an individual's intellect is well nourished, his temperamental idiosyncracies will take care of themselves. But the most perfected refinements of academic education, taken alone, fail to make a well-balanced personality.

#### WHY IS STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF CHILDREN SO NECESSARY?

The importance of a correct knowledge of the nature and nurture of childhood emotions is at once evident. A person's happiness and success are largely dependent upon his personality and character. But personality is the sum total of the ways in which one has learned to react to one's life situations. Personality thus becomes teachable, modifiable, improvable, a product of a wise directing of the interaction between environment and inborn tendencies.

The problem of helping children make wholesome adjustments to their daily life battles ought to be among the very first objectives of teachers and parents. Especially should parents and the elementary grade teachers make the building of healthy, emotional habits their chief goal. Many students of child life believe that the emotional life of a child is about 75 per cent developed by the time he reaches the ninth or tenth year. Since emotions play such an important part in the early life of the child and influence his success and failure in later life, some of the elemental characteristics of their development should be thoroughly understood by all those who are dealing with children.



## WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?

"Emotions may well be called bodily organic commotions."<sup>4</sup> Emotional responses are those inherited types of organic or bodily behavior that are distinguished by their impulsive, chaotic, tumultuous, and often explosive features. From the moment of birth certain stimuli provoke the infant to make specific, fairly well organized bodily readjustments.

For example, Watson found that when an infant's arms were pressed against its sides, or when its legs were held together tightly, the infant, in its effort to avoid or remove the irritating situation, responded by making certain rather strenuous, surging, seething, and tumultuous organic readjustments. Some of these strained and explosive bodily responses were: (1) stiffening of the whole body; (2) crying with wide-open mouth; (3) violent slashing of arms and legs, if they were free; (4) holding the breath until blue in the face; (5) marked changes in the circulation; and (6) other visceral changes.

Examples of visceral changes that take place during periods of great emotional stress are increased heart action, causing change in rate of circulation; decreased lung action; and increased action of the adrenal gland. The latter is particularly noticeable during moments of rage or fear. The gland then pours its secretion—adrenalin—into the blood. It is believed that this secretion exerts two effects: it (1) causes the blood to coagulate more readily and (2) stimulates the liver to release its store of glycogen directly into the blood in the form of sugar compound, thus producing the most available form of neuro-muscular energy.

HOW CAN WE DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN EMOTIONS  
AND OTHER REACTIONS?

Defining emotions as certain marked bodily or organic readjustments to certain situations makes them seem similar to bodily reactions that often accompany any vigorous exercise. The two types of reaction are much alike. Probably an illustration will

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<sup>4</sup> Harvey A. Carr, *Psychology: A Study of Mental Activity* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), p. 282.

best reveal their similarities and differences, as well as more clearly differentiate emotional reactions from all other kinds of responses.

While several blocks away, two men notice that a house is on fire. One is the owner, the other a neighbor. Both start to run. At once there is a readjustment of the action of the muscles of the heart, lungs, and glandular secretions commensurate with the needs of the situation. The status of a care-free organism is rapidly changed to one of tension, alertness, and vigor, after they start to run. But there is a marked difference in the changes in the two men. In the one case (the neighbor) the organic-muscular change in the organism is one which enables him to reach the scene of the fire more quickly. But in the other case (the owner) the sight of his house on fire so overstimulates him that the overt act—namely, running toward his home—is preceded by a chaotic, tumultuous, frenzied, and impulsive readjustment of the several organs and muscles which probably deter his effectiveness in action. In his case, an emotional situation of fear or anxiety exists.

Whether an organic adjustment is an emotional response or not depends, among other things, upon whether the readjustment is made in an orderly fashion, or whether it is accompanied by violent, tumultuous, on-rushing sensations. Carr sets forth in clear relief the characteristics of emotional responses:

We thus suggest that it is these surging, seething, tumultuous, impulsive and explosive features that constitute the distinctive characteristic of an emotional type of organic readjustment. Thus an emotion may well be called an organic commotion. In support of this conception, we may call attention to the well known fact that the emotions tend to disappear with action. Our anger soon cools and wanes when we begin to fight, and terror no longer holds us in its grip when we indulge in strenuous flight. The difference between these two conditions does not consist of the presence and absence of an organic disturbance, for both fighting and flight obviously involve a very pronounced readjustment on the part of the vital activities. Evidently the disappearance of the emotions with overt action is due to a change in the character of the organic reaction. Given an adequate motor outlet, these

organic activities gradually become adapted to the exigencies of the act, and hence they lose their initial tumultuous and impulsive character and the experience is no longer labelled an emotion.<sup>5</sup>

Carr's observation that tense emotional conditions are dispelled when an outlet for their discharge is found is of great significance to parents and teachers. In later paragraphs the importance of finding outlets for pent-up emotional urges is discussed as a curative measure for many emotional maladjustments.

#### HOW MANY PRIMITIVE OR ORIGINAL EMOTIONS ARE THERE?

There are probably only three or four genuinely original, hence distinctly primitive, types of emotion at birth. Watson, who has made probably the most significant contribution to the study of the emotional life of infants, finds that they have at least three general types of unlearned responses at birth. These three inherited reactions he calls the emotions of fear, rage, and love. In the infants studied he found that the types of emotion were quite simple at birth and that the stimuli which called them forth were few in number.

Hollingworth<sup>6</sup> believes there is yet another fundamental or primary attitudinal set of responses present at birth, or more probably shortly after. He calls this fourth set of readjustments gloom; and he suggests that it forms the germinal basis of the emotion of sorrow (grief). The thirty to forty varieties of emotions alluded to by popular writers in psychology, sociology, education, and fiction are probably outgrowths, complicated forms, or conditioned "off-shoots" from these three or four original emotions. In looking over the list of 132 children's faults, listed by their parents, it is interesting to note that at least thirty-five of them have pronounced emotional origin or attachment. Bad temper, pouting, showing off, teasing, whining, stubbornness, etc., all have emotional backgrounds. And, according to the best

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<sup>5</sup> Harvey A. Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-3.

<sup>6</sup> H. L. Hollingworth, *Mental Growth and Decline*, p. 117.

authorities, all these reactions and many more are off-shoots or complicated detached forms of fear, rage, love, and gloom.

### HOW IS EMOTIONAL LIFE COMPLICATED THROUGH FEAR?

**Varieties of fear.** If we are born with only three, or possibly four, emotions, how do we acquire so many distinct or accessory emotional sets? Watson found that new-born infants are afraid of only two stimuli, loud noises and loss of support. Yet there are literally millions of children three years of age and younger who are afraid of the dark, dogs, opossums, cats, rats, mice, snakes, rabbits, furry goods, feathery decorations, and false faces.

Among adults, there are fears innumerable, varying all the way from fear of a spider to fear of publicity. But each fear is qualitatively unique.

Fear of the dark is different from fear of publicity, fear of the dentist from fear of ghosts, fear of conspicuous success from fear of humiliation, fear of a bat from fear of a bear. Cowardice, embarrassment, caution and reverence may all be regarded as forms of fear. They all have certain physical, organic acts in common—those of organic shrinkage, gestures of hesitation and retreat.<sup>7</sup>

It must be, then, that the emotion of fear becomes attached to many of the ordinary objects and circumstances in one's life. In fact, there are as many fears as there are specific situations in life which will arouse the fear response. Our fears differ in number and kind. Those of the ignorant, superstitious savage vary widely in number and kind from those of the intelligent, educated man.

**How the fear response is conditioned.** It appears that the basic emotional mechanisms inherent at birth are attachable to almost any situation, realistic or imaginary. While only two stimuli, loud noises and loss of support, arouse the fear response at birth, a few months later certain conditions may be set up which will attach the fear response to a dozen or more new situations. This technique or method of setting up new conditions

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<sup>7</sup> John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Henry Holt and Co., 1922), pp. 154-5.

which will arouse the response is called conditioning, that is, causing or bringing about an emotional response. We can say, then, that the child is learning or acquiring fear responses. This conditioning of a fear response to stimuli other than the two original ones of loud noises and loss of support is effected by means of association, gradation, and transfer of elements inherent and incident to the original, set up conditions.

Let us go with Watson into his laboratory and see how this transfer is made; in short, see how the child learns to be afraid, how he develops emotional reactions of fear which are pitiable and which, if not unconditioned (unlearned or detached), will handicap him throughout life. In this laboratory are children who have never known any other home than a carefully controlled environmental life in the hospital. They have thus been saved from a home life where conditioned fear responses are daily evidenced.

Picture in this hospital a lively, healthy baby boy, about eleven months old, who has been playing for weeks with white rats, rabbits, pigeons, fur muffs, the hair of attendants, false faces, and toy blocks. Bear in mind that the fear response has been called out only by loud noises, such as striking an iron bar three feet long with a hammer, or by removing all support, as in falling. With these facts in hand, read carefully the following laboratory notes, wherein learning to be afraid or the conditioning of emotional fear responses is clearly illustrated. Watson says:

Our first experiment with Albert had for its object the conditioning of a fear response to a white rat. We first showed by repeated tests that nothing but loud sounds and removal of support would bring out fear response in this child. Everything coming within twelve inches of him was reached for and manipulated. His reaction, however, to a loud sound was characteristic of what occurs with most children. A steel bar about one inch in diameter and three feet long, when struck with a carpenter's hammer produced the most marked kind of reaction.

Our laboratory notes showing the progress in establishing a conditioned emotional response are given here in full:

*Eleven months, three days old.* (1) White rat which he had played with for weeks was suddenly taken from the basket (the



usual routine) and presented to Albert. He began to reach for rat with left hand. Just as his hand touched the animal the bar was struck immediately behind his head. The infant jumped violently and fell forward, burying his face in the mattress. He did not cry, however.

(2) Just as his right hand touched the rat the bar was again struck. Again the infant jumped violently, fell forward and began to whimper.

On account of his disturbed condition no further tests were made for one week.

*Eleven months, ten days old.* (1) Rat presented suddenly without sound. There was steady fixation but no tendency at first to reach for it. The rat was then placed nearer, whereupon tentative reaching movements began with the right hand. When the rat nosed the infant's left hand the hand was immediately withdrawn. He started to reach for the head of the animal with the forefinger of his left hand but withdrew it suddenly before contact. It is thus seen that the two joint stimulations given last week were not without effect. He was tested with his blocks immediately afterwards to see if they shared in the process of conditioning. He began immediately to pick them up, dropping them and pounding them, etc. In the remainder of the test the blocks were given frequently to quiet him and to test his general emotional state. They were always moved from sight when the process of conditioning was under way.

(2) Combined stimulation with rat and sound. Started, then fell over immediately to right side. No crying.

(3) Combined stimulation. Fell to right side and rested on hands with head turned from rat. No crying.

(4) Combined stimulation. Same reaction.

(5) Rat suddenly presented *alone*. Puckered face, whimpered and withdrew body sharply to left.

(6) Combined stimulation. Fell over immediately to right side and began to whimper.

(7) Combined stimulation. Started violently and cried, but did not fall over.

(8) Rat alone. *The instant the rat was shown the baby began to cry. Almost instantly he turned sharply to the left, fell over, raised himself on all fours and began to crawl away so rapidly that he was caught with difficulty before he reached the edge of the mattress.*<sup>8</sup>

Here one sees a child within a week made sorely afraid of what

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<sup>8</sup> John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (W. W. Norton and Co., 1925), pp. 126-7.

once was his dearest pet, a white rat. This fear was developed, not by any injury from the rat, but because the child associated the loud and fearful noise with the rat. Of course, when he is older, he will know that there is no connection between the two; but the foolish fear of all rats will haunt him, unless he is unconditioned; neither will he know why he is afraid of rats. The experiment is indicative of the facility with which many of our fears are acquired.

Nor does the spread of fears stop with this seemingly directly conditioned transfer. Take the case of the baby boy, Albert, in Watson's experiment. Here you will observe a conditioned emotional response of fear becoming somewhat attached to *similar or related stimuli*. Five days after the experiment, the baby showed not only marked fear responses toward the white rat but also toward the rabbit, the dog, a sealskin-coat, cotton, wool, a Santa Claus mask, in fact any object that was soft, fluffy, or downy. The spread or transfer was marked. The baby was not afraid of his blocks at any time, nor of the room in which the experiment was performed. These had neither been conditioned nor were they in any way like the white rat.

Experiments and observations seem to confirm the statement that the vast majority of our fears are acquired because of the unwholesome environmental conditions to which our sensitive organisms have been exposed. Parents and older children in the presence of younger children show their fears of fire, snakes, frogs, mice, thunder, etc., by means of screams, tense voices, jumps, and starts. Under such circumstances, probably a mongrel pup would learn to be afraid of objects which hitherto he had regarded playfully.

Another example showing how fears are conditioned is that of forcing a child into deep water when trying to teach him to swim. There is a direct connection with the original fear stimuli in this deep water situation. The child feels himself falling, being swept off his feet. Children are frequently fearful of water for years because of some early accident of falling in or of the foolish teasing of parents or older children.

Fear of closed rooms may have been caused by some fright

occasioned in early childhood. A certain mother and teacher report that a little kindergarten girl was accidentally left behind in a fire drill at school. Both doors of the room were closed by the wind with an awful bang. The child, being unable to open the doors, and further stimulated by the noisy running of children and the loud sounding fire gong (not unlike the iron bar), fell into a state of hysteria and was semi-conscious when found. It took months to overcome the effects of this unfortunate experience.

The fear of lightning has a direct connection with the original fear stimuli, the loud sound of the thunder with which it is closely associated. But even this fear is largely conditioned by the foolish, emotional reactions of parents and older children in the family.

Whether children are frightened accidentally or purposely (as by older children, just for fun) a process of reconditioning should be set up that will break up for all time the particular fear response.

#### HOW CAN CERTAIN FEAR RESPONSES BE UNCONDITIONED IN CHILDREN?

Some of the following methods for breaking up fear responses in children have been laboratory-tested. Probably any fear response, if not too pronounced, can be eliminated by the use of one or more of these methods, provided patience, persistence, and intelligence attend the unconditioning.

**Elimination through forgetting—Disuse.** Keeping the child away from the object that caused the fright is one of the oldest and simplest known methods of breaking up a fear response. The theory is that the child will forget, that is, that the neural fear connection will become weakened through disuse. Watson concludes from a limited number of experiments that the method is not so effective as was formerly believed. The memory of a fear situation is not easily forgotten. Shielding a child from the situation is at best a negative cure.

**The verbal or "talking it over" method.** Talking over the

cause of the fright with the child, recalling the attractive features of the object, explaining its origin, characteristics, and value, if it has any, is a commendable method, provided the child is old enough to understand clearly the explanations. The object of fear, of course, is not present at the time. Parents have reported to the authors that they have used this method quite effectively with children seven and eight years old who were afraid of opossums and lightning, respectively. The fear response was not broken up by this method alone; but a background of explanatory ideals and favorable concepts was built up which made the child less frantic in the presence of these stimuli. The parents took advantage of this stored-up knowledge in the child, combining it with the method of distraction.

**Method of distraction.** The object of the fear is present at a distance when this method is being used. The attractive and playful features of it are enthusiastically pointed out by the parent. For instance, a certain mother who was trying to help her small son overcome his fear of lightning had him watch a thunder storm with her. At each flash of jagged lightning she would exclaim, "Oh, wasn't that beautiful! Did you see how it lit up the whole heavens? How beautiful the clouds, trees, and field look! And wasn't that a loud thunder clap? It made me think of that giant fire-cracker we shot off on the Fourth." The child eventually became so interested in sharing the apparent joy experiences with the mother that the viscera maladjustments subsided, and finally he, too, was able to point out beauty in the sight.

**Method of social imitation.** Some attempt to overcome fear responses in a child by letting him see a group of children of about his own age experiencing great fun with the much-feared object. There is a possibility that his impulse to join the group will overcome his fear of the object. But this method is fraught with danger. The children, detecting his fright, may get great fun out of teasing him and chasing him with the snake, opossum, frog, or whatever the exciting object may be, thus making his fear response stronger than ever. If the whole situation could

be a "frame up" in which the children in the group had been told to help the boy overcome his fear by paying no attention to him and letting him take his time to join them voluntarily, the possibility of a positive cure would be greater.

**Method of direct unconditioning.** Watson reports how a three-year-old boy, Peter, was freed from his fear of a rabbit by the direct unconditioning method, as follows:

We seated him at a small table in a high chair. The lunch was served in a room about 40 feet long. Just as he began to eat his lunch, the rabbit was displayed in a wire cage of wide mesh. We displayed it on the first day *just far enough away not to disturb his eating*. This point was then marked. The next day the rabbit was brought closer and closer until disturbance was first barely noticed. This place was marked. The third and succeeding days the same routine was maintained. Finally the rabbit could be placed upon the table—then in Peter's lap. Next tolerance changed to positive reaction. Finally he would eat with one hand and play with the rabbit with the other, a proof that *his viscera were retrained along with his hands!*

After having broken down his fear reactions to the rabbit—the animal calling out fear responses of the most exaggerated kinds—we were next interested in seeing what his reactions would be to other furry animals and furry objects. *Fear responses to cotton, the fur coat, and feathers* were entirely gone. He looked at them and handled them and then turned to other things. He would even pick up the fur rug and bring it to the experimenter.<sup>8</sup>

Of the five methods mentioned for breaking up a fear response the last is undoubtedly the most effective, the first the least effective. Direct unconditioning takes more time, patience, and understanding of the child and the fear emotion; but the results justify the effort. If fear responses are uprooted and eliminated by such methods as described, why cannot the same technique, modified to suit the specific case, be used effectively in breaking up all other pernicious forms of emotional reactions, whether they be connected with fear, rage, or love?

In brief, emotional organization is subject to the same laws as other habits, both as to origin and as to decline. It remains

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<sup>8</sup> Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-8.



for parents and teachers to know and apply these laws of habit formation and elimination in ways most beneficial to the child and to society at large.

#### HOW IS RAGE CONDITIONED, TRANSFERRED, AND UNCONDITIONED?

**The original stimuli that produce the rage response.** Watson found that there were only three stimuli that would cause the rage (mad or anger) response in infants. Those three situations were: (1) holding the infant's legs tightly together; (2) pressing and holding its hands against its sides; and (3) holding the infant's head lightly between the hands. The primitive responses to these three stimuli were stiffening of the whole body; the free slashing movements of hands, arms, and legs; holding the breath; screaming; and reddening of the face, changing to blueness. These responses can be produced when the pressure upon the infant's arms or legs is not severe enough to produce the slightest injury.

The emotion of rage certainly has a hereditary background which causes the child to "put on a show" entirely disproportionate to the situation or stimulus exciting it. In short, any restraint upon the infant's bodily movements is certain to produce rage responses. What mother has not hundreds of times noticed rage reactions when she attempted to wrap the child's arms or legs in a blanket, cover his head, or forcibly pick him up?

**How rage emotions become complicated.** Since, with the infant, only three different stimuli are found to arouse the emotion of rage, how can one account for the great number of objects and occasions that will anger and enrage older children and adults? We become enraged at people; animals; organizations; social programs; dress suits; collar buttons; political organizations; institutions; social cuts and humiliations; reflections upon our work, integrity, or self-respect; gossip about our family; and ridicule of our religion.

Occasions in childhood that bring on fits of rage and tantrums are almost as diversified. If the child cannot open the door,

cannot catch his pup, cannot pull his wagon up hill, if his block house tumbles down, or his paper elephant continues to fall over, or if in any way he is restrained or thwarted by adverse reality, the child resorts to the primitive mode of expression—rage or anger. In fact, either child or adult is apt to exhibit anger or rage at anything which interferes with what he considers valued ends. How can we square these observations with the primitive emotion of anger, which manifested itself in response to three situations only?

Recall the laboratory explanation given for the transfer of fear in the preceding pages. The same principles apply to the complications of rage. Some part of the original response becomes attached to some analogous original stimulus. For example, an infant eight months old, while being bathed, is held too tightly by the nurse. The baby soon not only becomes enraged at the sight of this particular nurse but at the sight of anyone wearing the same garb. Partial details of one reaction become attached to a partial set of other stimuli. Emotional reactions become elaborated, organized, differentiated, and attached to analogous objects, situations, and conditions. Possibly childish resentment against a tyrannical and domineering parent becomes so peculiarly organized in his sentiment as to account for his temperamental radicalism and revolt as a man against those in authority in his business, political, or social organizations.

**How emotions of rage can be unconditioned.** Rage emotions can be handled in the same ways as those suggested for fear responses: (1) by eliminating the cause, hence curing it by disuse; (2) by talking it over with the child; (3) by the method of distraction, that is, calling his attention to some more attractive substitute response; (4) by social imitation; and (5) by direct unconditioning.

Parents could often prevent their children from going into tantrums if greater foresight were used. When a parent knows that a certain situation invariably calls forth rage on the part of his child, he could help avert the spell or scene by setting up a situation that would shield the child until his health, nervous reserve, or reasoning ability was adequate to the situation.

For example, a child has been permitted to stay up very late and has had an exciting evening. Under such circumstances, any normal child is likely to create a "scene" upon the slightest provocation. The child is not himself. The wise mother is the one who foresees the possibilities in such a situation and who does everything in her power to prevent loss of self-control when the child is being put to bed. Even if the child does lose control, the parent must not. To punish him for impudence or disobedience when he is already beside himself is futile. It tends to aggravate rather than help the situation.

Thus one of the best ways to minimize anger responses is to foresee and provide an environment which is normal, regular, and healthful, so that there will be few or no occasions for tantrums. Disuse of his bad emotional habit will cause it to die a natural death. But, when a break does come, the adult must keep calm and show genuine sympathy rather than anger and disgust; and, when the fury is past, he should point out to the child, in a quiet way, all points pertinent to his failure. With the child's approval, give him easy but nevertheless challenging situations in which he can practice self-control. See that he wins in these set-up conflicts; and praise him generously for his efforts.

A certain seven-year-old boy was sure to fly into a rage if he was struck out in baseball or if he failed flatly in any phase of the game. He would lose all self-control, scream, and fight anyone who tried to point out his error to him. His teachers and parents had whipped him severely on two occasions for creating such scenes. At other times he had either been forbidden to play any more that day or was sent to bed. All these forms of disciplining had only tended to aggravate the outbursts.

In considering further how to help the child, the use of Method 1 (elimination of a fault by disuse) was not practicable, because daily he would be facing social situations which necessitated self-control. The child was appealed to and the situation talked over with him (Method No. 2). Being a reasonable lad, he saw during the conference with his father how unfair, foolish, and unsportsmanlike was his flying into tantrums. He decided to exercise

self-control at the next game or voluntarily sit out a few innings, until he had himself in hand.

The following day, a chance for direct unconditioning (Method No. 5) or breaking up of the bad temper response was afforded. When the father, who was playing with the boys, saw that the child was being severely tried, he complimented him for holding on, and by smiles, nods of approval, and the use of certain phrases and allusions understood only by father and son, helped him to triumph. At points where it was evident the child could stand no more, the father played in the son's place, while he rested. The father and the other boys in the group took the bad breaks against them, and by word and deed showed how little a mistake counted, if one but did his best. By use of practically all five methods, supplemented by a generous amount of patience, persistence, sympathy, and intelligent direction there came almost perfect self-control in this and analogous situations.

#### IS RAGE DELETERIOUS PHYSICALLY AND SOCIALLY?

Laboratory experimentation has proved that the emotional states of rage are hard on the child. Blood tests of infants who have been enraged show an excess of blood sugar. This probably signifies that the adrenal gland is secreting at a rapid rate. All the organs of the viscera experience radical and abrupt changes during tantrums and fits of anger. This is especially true of children whose nervous mechanism responds wholeheartedly. It is little wonder that, after such a disturbance, children are exhausted and have to be put to bed. Digestion is often upset for several hours; and in sleep there is restlessness. Few emotions are so deleterious and deteriorating as rage.

Social injuries also are apt to result from rage outbursts. Too often, when a child has a tantrum at home or at school, someone runs to his rescue and tries to pet and cajole him back into good humor. Soon he realizes that screams and outbursts bring solicitude and attention; so he "throws a fit" on the slightest provocation. Thus he is either spoiled or else robbed of all independence

and self-reliance. Rather should he be helped before he breaks, or after he has ceased crying and has started again upon his own initiative to conquer his problem.

#### HOW IS LOVE CONDITIONED, TRANSFERRED, AND CONTROLLED?

**Original stimuli of this response.** The study of the emotion of love in the infant is beset with a great many difficulties. Observations, consequently, have been incidental rather than directly experimental. The original stimuli to such responses apparently are stroking of the skin, tickling, gentle rocking, and patting. The responses are especially easy to bring out by the stimulation of what we may call the erogenous zones. The response in an infant depends upon its state; when crying, the crying will cease and a smile begin. Gurgling and cooing follow. Violent movements of arms and trunk, with pronounced laughter, are made by six- to eight-months-old infants, when tickled. The responses indicated are those popularly called "affectionate," "good natured," "kindly," etc. The term "love" embraces all of these, as well as the responses between adults of opposite sex.<sup>9</sup>

**How it is transferred or complicated.** The number of original stimuli calling forth the so-called love response in infants is infinitesimally small compared to the number of stimuli, responses, and their antecedent attachments in later life. Though it is true that stroking the skin, patting, rocking, and mild tickling will always provoke a mild, emotional glow, this same instinctive tendency which we have labelled love becomes decidedly romantic as the child develops in adolescence and the organs of reproduction become most sensitive to stimuli.

But, by adolescence and adulthood, one has learned to be thrilled pleasantly by a great number of things. The process of complication of responses is similar to that in fear and rage, through gradation and transfer. Such emotional traits as joy, sympathy, elation, gratitude, reverence, aesthetic feelings, vanity, wanting attention, showing off, selfishness, conceit, or self-pity are only derivatives of the hereditary emotion of love.

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<sup>9</sup> Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.



## HOW CAN LOVE BE CONTROLLED?

The same five methods used in unconditioning fear and rage could well apply to the uprooting of maladjustments in the emotion of love. Romantic love or sex attractiveness may lead to beautiful and wholesome reactions. Children should be helped to understand it. We have no hesitancy in explaining that, although hunger is natural, we must not eat whatever we desire and whenever or wherever it pleases us. In much the same way, Morgan<sup>10</sup> suggests that we explain to the adolescent child (when the occasion arises) that sex hunger is as natural and normal as hunger for food but, like hunger for food, must be controlled. Thus will the child be helped to see all his reflexes, impulses, and emotions and their attendant desires and necessary curbing in an intelligent way.

But how shall we deal with the sex impulse, if character is to be best developed? Sex impulses have potentialities for good or for evil. To every strong impulse there is bound to be one of three manifestations: (1) a violent, spasmodic, abrupt outcome; (2) a secretive, surreptitious, and suppressed outcome; or (3) a sublimation to allied and contributory channels. What attitude shall parents and teachers take toward manifestations of the sex impulse in youth, so that, because of this impulsive tendency, life will be richer, fuller, and happier?

One of three things may be done: the manifestation may be (1) denounced and upbraided; (2) ignored entirely; or (3) used as an educational opportunity to socialize the child. The early reaction to the manifestation is crucial.

If the first course is taken, the chances are strong that the child's attention will become focused upon this impulse, to the end that he becomes morbid. He may commit some violent, vicious assault or, what is more probable, practice some equally disastrous, secretive, sexual perversion.

To ignore the impulse is equally dangerous; impulsive urges

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<sup>10</sup> John J. B. Morgan, *The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child*, p. 80 f.

cannot be lightly pushed aside. Again, probable results will be undesirable sexual practices.

The third, the wholesome course that should be pursued, is to recognize the potentialities of the impulse, help the child understand its manifestation, and give intelligent and sympathetic direction to its development. If this course is followed, there will be little danger of either violent and abrupt or secretive and perverted outcomes. Such intelligent direction will result in a sublimation of the impulse. That is, the instinctive emotions will be diverted from their original ends and re-directed to purposes satisfying to the individual and of value to the community.

For example, the sex impulse in the boy may be sublimated in acts of chivalry toward the other sex; or by pursuing some worthy project in dramatics, music, or athletics. Later, in adult life, sublimation of the same instinct is likely to be expressed, not only in chivalrous deeds toward the opposite sex, but through association with some other strong and allied impulse, such as creativeness or altruism. The painting of a picture, the writing of a poem, the preaching of a sermon, the planning of a beautiful building, or espousing some worthy cause may be the wholesome channel through which this sublimated inner urge is expressed.

#### CONCLUSION

1. The right training of the emotional life of childhood is every iota as important as the right training of his intellectual life. This is poignantly evident when one considers:
  - (a) Adult "mental breakdowns" can nearly always be traced to unhealthy emotional habits learned in childhood.
  - (b) Criminal delinquencies, both in youth and adulthood, are largely due to pernicious emotional distortions acquired in childhood.
  - (c) The failures and half-successes of adults, in both their vocational and avocational pursuits, are directly attributable to faulty and aggravating traits in their

personality. These annoying emotional traits of one's personality are built in childhood.

2. Parents and teachers have never appreciated sufficiently the value of building in the child right emotional attitudes first, and such intellectual habits as knowledges and skills second.
3. The child must feel certain repulsions against being inflicted with certain weaknesses, such as foolish fears, losing his head in rage, dishonesty, shiftlessness, and procrastination, before the opposites of these faults can be learned economically.
4. Emotional habits are learned in exactly the same way that all intellectual habits are learned, by practice with satisfaction.
5. The most economical method to use in helping a child to acquire certain desirable emotional habits is in connection with certain trying life situations in which he wishes to conquer or succeed. If he realizes that, only in the degree that he possesses certain emotional reactions for such trying occasions will success or defeat be likely to ensue, he will have a readiness to choose and practice the desired response. For example, if a boy desires to be a sure and heavy hitter in baseball, and if he realizes that only in the degree that he practices self-control and refuses to be moved by taunts of others can his success be assured, then this tense life situation affords both him and his parent, coach, or teacher the best possible means for the learning of certain desirable habits and the overcoming of the undesirable habits.

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

SELFISHNESS, THOUGHTLESSNESS OF OTHERS, SELF-CENTEREDNESS,  
CONCEIT, VANITY, BOSSINESS, SHOWING OFF,  
AND DEMANDING ATTENTION

1. Is it not perfectly natural for a child to have all eight of these traits? Would not one be uneasy if the child were lacking in them?

2. Are not these traits signs that the child's ego or self-assertiveness is in an aggressive, healthy condition?
3. Whence came these so-called faults of the child? Are they acquired entirely by imitation, or are they natural outcomes of the clashes between his ego and his environment?
4. What possibility of transforming these eight egotistic, self-centered traits of childhood into altruistic characteristics can there be, if the children are exposed daily to any of the following environments:
  - (a) An environment in which continual selfishness and vanity are practiced by adults?
  - (b) An environment in which adults express indications of gain and satisfaction when indulging their selfish interests?
  - (c) A home and community environment in which material possessions are considered worth infinitely more than spiritual development?
  - (d) An environment where newspaper accounts of greed and graft escaping the law are continually discussed?
  - (e) A home where parents continually spoil and pamper children by having them "show off" before company?
5. Will not egotism be supplanted by altruism largely in the degree that the child:
  - (a) Early gets satisfaction in serving others?
  - (b) Early learns to see the needs of others and gratifies his ego by feeling that his help has been indispensable?
  - (c) Is early challenged to do more than other members of the group for his home or school?

#### STEALING

1. Do children sometimes steal because they see others do it and "get by"? How could you prove to a child that it does not pay to steal, especially when he hears daily discussion of grafting and stealing by big business concerns and men in high governmental positions?
2. Is the child denied an allowance? To what might this denial lead?
3. Is the child denied possession of certain things which practically all his playmates possess and which, in his estimation, are very much worth while? If it is impossible for him to have these things, what might be the effect of a

sympathetic, heart-to-heart talk and explanation regarding the circumstances? Children have been glad to do without certain things when they felt that they were helping their parents or teacher.

4. Would the stealing problem be solved in many cases, if needy children were helped to get work after school hours and during vacations?
5. Would placing children in positions of trust in the school give them practice and joy in being honest? (e. g., charge of supplies sold.)
6. Would it be possible to have some of the best people in the community sponsor children who have had wrong home training, freely giving them counsel and helping them to secure positions of trust?
7. Do you always understand the motive which prompted a child to steal? Children have been known to steal because they were able to display possessions which gave them prestige in the estimation of their playmates. Children have been known to steal to "get even" with someone who has wronged them. Jealousy of another's possessions has prompted stealing among adolescents. A child who fails in his school work often tries to gain the esteem of his pals by having plenty of spending money for gum or candy.
8. Do children sometimes steal because life is drab, because they need excitement and love adventure?
9. Would not a thorough analysis of the causes of the child's stealing, followed by a change in conditions which would encourage and reward honesty, be a general plan to follow in all such cases?

**BAD TEMPERED, SULLEN, IMPUDENT, NERVOUS, EXCITABLE,  
LACKING IN SELF-CONTROL, POUTS, IS  
PEEVISH AND WHINES**

1. Does the child gain anything, does he get his own way by displaying bad temper or being impudent?
2. If he gets his own way and becomes the center of attention by exhibiting these undesirable traits, what effect will it have on his future reactions?
3. Would his keeping late and irregular hours, eating improper food, being in a run-down condition physically provoke any of these undesirable traits?
4. Has the child ever witnessed others (parents, perhaps) exhibiting such traits as bad temper, sullenness, peevish-



ness, etc.? Was the child born with these despicable traits or did he acquire them?

5. Would being able to see the humor in a situation often relieve the tension?
6. Do you know all the factors operating which cause such emotional displays? Will substitution act as an alleviator?
7. When the unfortunate outbreaks occur, do you further aggravate the trait by losing your own self-control so that bad temper gains a deeper hold on the child?
8. Would it not be well to ignore the fit of temper and impudence when the child is beside himself and patiently and sympathetically wait for a calmer period when you can quietly "talk it over"?
9. Would whipping or otherwise humiliating a child, when he is in such a tantrum, make him more angry and sullen, and thus act as a strong stimulus to wrong "emotionalized sets"?
10. Does not chronic sullenness indicate that the child is failing in his conflicts with reality, losing self-confidence, and, in this way, paving the way for a life of failure and even crime?
11. Would providing the child many situations in which he wins help him develop self-confidence, preserve his ego, and tend to insure him against such outbreaks?
12. Could the child, his teacher, and parents make a canvas of those life situations which have hitherto caused him to lose his temper, analyze what was so provoking about each, and finally work out some device which would forestall future breakdowns? For instance, a certain boy became exasperated at another's bragging of his baseball prowess. This resulted in the child's losing his head and trouncing the braggart. When he realized, however, how silly the habit of bragging was, he decided, after talking the situation over, not to get angry at such a thing in future.
13. Do nervous, excitable, whining parents and teachers have the same kind of children?
14. Would parents and teachers with optimism, enthusiasm, poise, sympathy, and understanding be a bulwark of protection against nervousness, loss of control, pouting, and peevishness?
15. Would it be possible to provide such a program of happy, attractive activities that the child's life would be too full

to give him time to think of hurt feelings or of imaginary ills?

16. Is the strong, healthy child who spends much time in the fresh air and sunshine usually free from nervous disorders and their innumerable offshoots?
17. Does the child sometimes sulk, pout, act impatiently, or pretend illness in order to get attention? Would completely ignoring such demonstrations and refusing to grant requests until they were made in a pleasing, self-controlled way, help the child?
18. Would an effective way of helping the child to gain self-control be to set up attractive activities that would bring satisfaction and glory, when successfully completed, but whose success depends upon the practice of desirable virtues?

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE EFFECT OF PHYSICAL CONDITIONS UPON HABITS

Unhealthy physical condition in a child is almost certain to provoke some kind of mental maladjustment. Poor health is not the only source of misbehavior, as the four preceding chapters have shown. But teachers and parents know from unhappy experiences that a "run-down" and half-sick child is invariably a problem child, so long as those conditions obtain. Studies have been made which trace a large percentage of disciplinary problems to the poor physical condition of pupils.

Parents and teachers have carried on great and worthy health crusades during the past decade, resulting in marked improvement of health, bodily vigor, and growth of children. In many instances these "health drives" emphasized good health because it meant good resistance, the greatest preventive to many communicable diseases. But good physical health should be emphasized also because of its direct connection with good mental health. In short, physical health and mental health are mutually inter-related and interdependent.

#### WHAT SPECIFIC FACTORS AFFECT THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN?

**How does improper diet affect the physical and mental condition of children?** In this enlightened age of authentic, free pamphlets and bulletins, there is no legitimate excuse for not knowing the value of the common food elements, such as mineral substances, proteins, starches, sugars, fats, cellulose, the vitamins, and the common foods that are rich in them. Nevertheless, many children are literally starving to death, even in homes of wealth, for certain nutritive food elements. There is plenty of food; but the proper elements are either lacking or not in the

right proportion. Many physical defects are due directly to an improper or unbalanced diet. Dr. Lucas<sup>1</sup> names the following as outstanding and readily noticeable physical results of malnutrition: below weight for height and age, below height for age, too easily tired on slight exertion, poor general physical development, flabby musculature, incorrect posture, secondary anemia, poor circulation, pallor of lips and skin, cold hands and feet, feeble powers of digestion and assimilation, poor resistance to infections, and frequent colds.

But the mental results of malnutrition are equally numerous and equally serious. In the list of 132 faults of children, the following have probably been conditioned or aggravated because of malnutrition: night terrors, sleep disturbances, irritability, slow mentality, nervousness, bad temper, contradicting, demanding attention, being discontented, excitable, inattentive, pouting, peevishness, restlessness, stubbornness, inferiority complexes, and dawdling over food.

Good food habits can be readily established in little children, because in the beginning the child knows nothing of foods except those served to him. But the frequency with which parents mention "dawdling over food" indicates that poor habits have been allowed to develop. It is believed that an observance of the following principles would insure the building of desirable eating habits:

1. Serve wholesome, well-cooked foods without comment or question. Let the attitude of the family be "Eat and enjoy this splendid meal."
2. When introducing a new food, serve only a small quantity to the child at the time when he is really hungry.
3. See that the food is not only well-cooked but palatable and attractive in appearance.

Some of the causes of perverted food habits are:

1. The child has heard and seen others at the table show a distaste for some particular food.

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<sup>1</sup> Wm. P. Lucas, M. D., *The Health of the Runabout Child*, pp. 166-7.

2. The child, wanting attention, puts on a scene by refusing to eat, and thus becomes the center of attraction.
3. The first introduction to some food may have been unpleasant and hence, ever afterwards, he associates this disagreeable experience with the particular food. For example, children have been known to dislike soups because they were too highly seasoned with salt, pepper, or some other strong condiment. Dislike for eggs has arisen because they were burned, scorched, or served cold or unattractively.
4. Too often food may have a "flat" taste, be without flavor, unappetizing, and negative in appearance.

How do play, fresh air, and sunshine affect the physical and mental condition of children? Norsworthy and Whitley say on this subject:

A child who does not play not only misses much of the joy of childhood but he can never be a fully developed adult. He will lack in manhood many of the qualities most worth while because many of the avenues of growth were unused and neglected during the most plastic period of his life.<sup>2</sup>

Burbank<sup>3</sup> suggests that a child misses the best part of his education if he is deprived of mud pies, grasshoppers, tadpoles, frogs, mud turtles, acorns, trees to climb, brooks to wade in, woodchucks, bats, bees, butterflies, various animals to pet, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries and hornets.

Play may be regarded as an instinctive tendency. Little children get many of their meanings of life through play. To deny them an outlet for this play impulse not only retards their physical growth but, what is equally serious, may excite certain emotional disorders, moods, and mental responses, such as bad temper, irritability, bullying, contradicting, disobedience, irresponsibility, lack of initiative, dissatisfaction, excitability, impudence, lack of imagination, lack of self-confidence, nervousness, peevishness, whining, sullenness, and inferiorities. Not only do the traits of

<sup>2</sup> Norsworthy and Whitley, *Psychology of Childhood* (By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers, 1918), p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Luther Burbank, *The Training of the Human Plant*.



sterling character that may be developed through play and work supplant the defects listed, but they insure a personality of balance and a character of stability.

But where shall this play impulse have its fulfillment? Certainly not in stuffy rooms. A large house or room is no guarantee of fresh air. Children should play out of doors as much as possible. When this cannot be arranged, the indoor play room should be well ventilated and sunny. Dead air is the breeding place of colds and infectious diseases.

The importance of fresh air and sunshine as germicides and guarantors of good health is slowly penetrating the imagination of our people. Sun baths and twenty-four-hour fresh air exposures are fast gaining popularity as cures for some of the most malignant diseases. It is a scathing denunciation of adult intelligence that these two great forces, sunshine and fresh air, are ignored and neglected in so many instances until the ravages of some disease have swooped down upon the helpless child, making his life wretched both physically and mentally. Dr. Lucas says:

*Sunshine in the open air* is childhood's greatest ally. To keep the normal child healthy, give him sunshine. To help the sick child get well, give him sunshine, not by the bottle but by days' full. Tuberculosis and pneumonia, rickets, malnutrition, bronchitis, and many acute infectious diseases are directly affected by the rays of the sun. Children should be gradually accustomed to direct sunshine upon their bodies and should be allowed to play outdoors with as little clothing on as possible, in white rompers with low neck and short sleeves, sandals and light sun hat. The white or light-colored clothing allows the light rays to penetrate to the skin.

The most convincing plea for the value of sunshine for the well child during the period of great growth is actually to see the sunshine at work on the body of a sick child.

In February, 1918, during the war, I visited Dr. Rollier's Sanatorium at Leysin, Switzerland, and to my surprise found his institution crowded with children and some French and English soldiers, altogether some two thousand cases. The hillsides were dotted with the various hotels for the treatment of different types of cases. The children came from all over the world, Russia, Germany, America, France, Italy, Switzerland, etc., and the

majority were suffering from bone tuberculosis. These cases were being treated by the direct rays of the sun. Dr. Rollier's method is to begin by exposing the feet of the patient first, and by slow ascending exposure of legs, thighs, abdomen, chest, back, etc., to reach the sun bath for the entire body for over an hour at a time by the end of the first month. The body becomes pigmented in varying degrees, shading from a light brown to a rich mahogany color. As the children become accustomed to the sun, they spend the entire day out of doors with loin cloths and sun hats and sandals as their only covering. The children have their lessons, their rest periods, their games, all out of doors, and when our party was there, it was a cold winter day with winter snow crust covering the hills and we were cold in spite of our fur coats and heavy clothing. But the children, playing and working in the sun with just loin cloths and sandals, were glowing with warmth. Those lying out on their beds were even moist with perspiration.

The great impression made upon me was the fine healthy condition of the children. Their faces were bright, animated, filled with life and spirit, and not the usual passivity of the child shut up in an institution. Their color and the tone of their muscles I shall never forget. They were so normal and healthy and their muscles were hard and beautifully rounded out. The affected areas were usually in a healthy condition, even where there were discharging sinuses. This impression of the splendid general tone of the children only confirmed my own previous personal experience with the sun treatment in California.<sup>4</sup>

**How does sleep affect the physical and mental condition?** The hours of sleep are the restorative period of the twenty-four hour day. Children below the age of six should sleep at least twelve hours daily and, if underweight, probably one to two hours more. When one considers the tense and artificial life of today, one realizes that probably few children sleep enough, even in the best regulated homes.

Some conditions that are conducive to sound, restful sleep for children are: daily, complete bowel evacuation; clean nose and throat passages; a clean body; quiet, cool room or sleeping porch; no artificial light; clean, comfortable bed; and regular time and

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<sup>4</sup> Wm. P. Lucas, *The Health of the Runabout Child* (By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers, 1923), pp. 56-8.

place for going to bed. A child should be put to bed before he becomes too tired. Many of the vexing, emotional outbursts of children are due to insufficient sleep. Especially is this true of the adolescent youth who is experiencing decided changes in growth. Some of our leading psychiatrists believe that dementia praecox (premature mental deterioration) so common in adolescence could be prevented in at least 40 per cent of cases if parents and teachers cooperated in seeing that a strong, healthy physique was developed in boys and girls.

When parents permit their children to stay up until all hours, they are not only impairing the child's bodily vigor but are also depleting his nervous energy. They are preparing rich soil for the growth of such nervous disorders as tantrums, melancholia, irritability, and bad temper, as well as hindering the development of such needed mental abilities as initiative, alertness, concentration, enthusiasm, and thinking.

**How does clothing affect the physical and mental condition?** Sometimes a source of irritation to the child is his clothing. It is too tight, too rough, too coarse, or too good to play in. In the last instance, the child labors under the constant fear that, if his clothes are soiled or torn, severe punishment will follow. Mothers could invent few devices which would give greater assurance of irritability, dissatisfaction, affectation, or "sissy" characteristics than unsuitable clothing. The boy who is always "dressed up" does not have a chance with the rough and tumble gang on the vacant lot. Not only does he become the butt of the jokes of the gang, but he is denied one of the most wholesome outlets for his impulsive and instinctive tendencies—through play.

Shoes may be a continual source of physical and mental irritation. The human foot is a delicately adjusted mechanism of bones, ligaments, muscles, nerves, and blood vessels, and is, in the growing period, very easily distorted or thrown out of balance by continued pressure of badly fitting shoes or by lack of attention to the beginning of trouble. It is impossible to measure the handicap which "flat foot," with the resulting inefficiency, imposes upon the human race, but that it is great enough to warrant

the taking of all the pains necessary to prevent it is beyond dispute.

In choosing clothing for children, mothers should remember that its main purpose should be to give comfort and service. Why do we have children wear clothing which, by its very texture and style, makes them irritable, uneasy, or nervous, or causes them to think too much of their appearance? Why do we clothe children in such a way that the greatest protective agency of health, namely sunshine, is given absolutely no opportunity to function?

**How do certain common diseases affect the physical and mental condition?** Common diseases of children, such as whooping cough, measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, common colds, adenoid growths, and diseased tonsils are the sources of many mental disturbances. They weaken the nervous energy of the child and tend to make acute such emotional disturbances as tantrums, pouting, nervousness, bad temper, stubbornness, sullenness, excitability, and supersensitiveness. They also tend to slow him up in his mental reactions so that he has less initiative, alertness, imagination, concentration, and creative powers. Failure in school work is apt to be another added aggravation to his already over-abused self. Teachers and parents could do much to prevent such conditions by watching carefully and giving immediate attention to the early symptoms of trouble.

**How do the care of teeth, eyes, and ears affect the physical and mental condition?** Numerous authentic bulletins have been written by specialists on these three topics. The far-reaching and drastic effects of decayed teeth, diseased ears, and poor eyesight are too well appreciated to need any further emphasis in a book of this nature. Health clinics are established in practically every town and city school system, while county health nurses and supervisors are being well received in the rural districts.

Aside from the excruciating physical pain brought on by eye, ear, or tooth trouble, the mental anguish is indescribable. Nervous disorders, in their most acute forms, resulting even in insanity or suicide have had their beginning in these ailments. Because of these defects, inferiority complexes have arisen. The

child cannot keep up with his classmates when he is thus handicapped; so he becomes discouraged, gives up, broods, and is melancholy or morose. Can parents and teachers permit a child thus handicapped to go on losing in his fight for health, success, and happiness, when a dentist or a physician could easily remove or lessen the handicap?

#### HOW CAN OBSERVANCE OF THE LAWS OF HEALTH BE MADE ATTRACTIVE TO CHILDREN?

If the child's physical health determines in a large measure his mental health, how can we get his cooperation in our health program? The child must *desire* good health and feel its need so keenly that he will obey certain laws of health. The cooperation of the child is easily secured when once he sees that his most prized wishes cannot be realized unless he makes certain health duties and laws his ally.

For example, some high school girls said they "simply could not bear the thought of drinking buttermilk." A few days later a skin specialist, while lecturing, emphasized the efficacy of buttermilk as a purifying, beautifying agent for the complexion. Soon all these girls were drinking several glasses daily of this previously "unbearable" beverage. The child must see a direct relation between his desired ambition or goal and the spinach, carrots, eggs, and milk that he is asked to eat. As Dr. Lucas suggests, the child will not need to be forced to eat his cereal and baked potato, or to drink his glass of milk when he feels that these foods are directly related to the mark upon the wall which shows how tall he is or the number on the scale bar which shows how much he weighs. Giving children honest reasons for their observance of certain health laws is probably the best way to translate these laws into life.

#### CONCLUSION

1. In the past we have linked the preservation of the daily good health of the child with the prevention of certain



physical diseases. It is about time that we link the strong physical health of the child with the prevention of:

- (a) Certain malignant mental diseases and breakdowns.
  - (b) Certain undesirable character traits.
  - (c) Certainty of failure in later life in one's vocations and avocations.
2. Fresh air and sunshine are two of the greatest guarantors of health known to medical science. Both are free. There is no reason in the majority of homes, except stark laziness and indifference, for children's being denied these two necessities.
  3. The child should not be made sensitive regarding the direct connection between his physical health and his mental health; but his teachers and parents cannot give too much attention to this direct relationship.
  4. The three laws of learning and their correlates must operate, if health habits are to be acquired economically. This means that the child must practice health duties and laws with satisfaction.
  5. But continued practice of laws of health is largely dependent upon how much the child feels the need of them. *He* must see a direct connection *now* between the health habit and some, to him, very desirable end. For example, the child must see and feel the direct connection between the buttermilk and the improved complexion, between certain vegetables and physical and mental alertness, between fruit and velvety color, between soft boiled eggs and the scale of measurements.
  6. Helping the child form early the correct health habits is his birthright. Few habits are learned more easily and persist more strongly than the hygienic or unhygienic habits of childhood.

#### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

HATES TO GO TO BED, REFUSES TO TAKE NAPS

1. Do you allow your child to tire himself almost to nervous exhaustion, and then expect him to go peacefully to bed?

2. Do you permit irregularities with regard to sleeping hours? Can one afford to vary more than half an hour in the bedtime of very little folks? Children's nervous systems are so wonderfully adjusted that regularity and normality are essential for good results.
3. Is the bed clean and inviting, the child's clothes clean and free from irritation, the room quiet and free from artificial light, the temperature of the room moderate?
4. Would it be well to have a pleasant half-hour before bedtime in which some unexciting story is told or read to the child?
5. Would a warm bath be conducive to sleep?
6. Are not most bedtime troubles occasioned by allowing the child to stay up too late, eat too many sweets, or get wildly excited?
7. Would it be well for parents to treat going to bed at a regular hour as a matter-of-fact custom?
8. With older children, would it be effective to talk over the necessity of sleep and its direct connection with a velvety complexion or a good batting eye?
9. Would providing a day of wholesome activities, wherein the child experienced success, tend to make him ready for rest?
10. Can anything solve the problem more effectively than regularity, both as to time and place, and manner of response expected of the child when bedtime comes?

#### DAWDLES OVER FOOD, HAS INTEREST IN IMPROPER FOOD

1. Do you place fresh, appetizing, attractive food before the child, when he is hungry, and in a matter-of-fact way which plainly indicates that it is taken for granted that he will eat it?
2. Or do you fret in his presence about the possibility of his not liking some food and so make him feel that there is something wrong with it?
3. Do you feed him and hover over him, when he shows displeasure with his food? Possibly he is anxious to be the center of attraction and likes the attention his refusing to eat brings to him. If he does not want to eat, it might be well to let him go without a meal. Children have survived worse ordeals.
4. Do adults show their displeasure when certain foods are served? Children are great imitators. The caprices of adults are very suggestive to them.

5. Do you serve too much and so let him form the habit of leaving food on his plate? Would it not be better to give him a second helping, if he wishes more?
6. Are his hours for meals regular?
7. Do you introduce new foods attractively, in small quantities, palatably flavored, and at a time when he is genuinely hungry?
8. Do you serve plain, nourishing food, permitting sweets (if at all) only at the close of the meal?
9. Do you keep in mind the bad effects of worry, anger, and fear upon digestion? Would it be better not to have a meal when such emotions prevail?
10. Is not eating between meals the cause of later digestive troubles and failure to enjoy meals at regular hours?
11. Should very young children eat at the same table as adults? Will they not want foods which they see others eating but which are not good for them?

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

Probably no period in the life of the child causes more anxiety than adolescence. Parents who hitherto have been blissfully unconcerned about their children now become anxious. And well they may be, for unless childhood has been a wholesome, happy period of adjustment to life situations, the transition from childhood to adulthood is likely to be fraught with grave dangers.

What problems are incident to this adolescent period? A partial answer was obtained from over 700 mothers of junior and senior high school students who participated in a series of lectures on "Character and Personality Improvement." At the first meeting, these mothers were asked to list their problems so that the readings and discussions of the remaining periods might be of most value to them. The following questions were most frequently asked in the unsigned letters of these mothers of adolescent boys and girls:

1. How can I give my two adolescent children more freedom and yet exercise greater control?
2. How can I develop in my sixteen-year-old daughter an independence of community standards? For instance, her crowd smoke, pet, drink, and have all-night parties and unless she indulges she is regarded as "odd."
3. How can I develop in my boy a sense of responsibility?
4. How can I develop initiative, ambition, and idealism in my boy?
5. How can I get my children to practice their music?
6. How can we get home entertainments that will compete with those of the fraternities and sororities?
7. How can I get girls interested in physical education, outdoor activities and gymnasium? Their chief ambition is to go joy riding with their crowd after school.
8. Should parents withdraw from the child's entertainments after he is nine or ten?

9. Explain why no two children have the same environment.
10. How can I get my child to do distasteful duties such as to study, wash dishes, fire the furnace, etc.?
11. How can I help my girl be less boy crazy?
12. How can I get my boys to remain in school? (They run off to the country, want to get a job, think education is not necessary.)
13. What vocational guidance books or instructions shall I give my boys?
14. How can I help my boy overcome his careless habits about his room and clothes?
15. What can I do with a boy who has a restless, pioneering spirit? (Wants to go to South America.)
16. How can I help my fifteen-year-old girl get over being selfish, forgetful, stubborn, nervous, and desirous of showing off in class? (She is failing in school.)
17. How can I help a girl become interested in other subjects besides music?
18. How can I help my children make passing grades in school?
19. How can I discourage my son from choosing bad associates? He argues that it is a part of a liberal education to get worldly wise.
20. What educational or organized efforts can we parents make who oppose the laxity and all-night parties which are condoned and secretly sponsored by certain parents who call themselves modernists?
21. How can I help my child cease being so conscientious? (Copies whole page because of one error.)
22. How can I help my children be quick in dressing? It takes them so long that there is no time for breakfast.
23. How can I develop the fight and regular boy spirit in my son?
24. How can I help my child overcome daydreaming?
25. How can I help my children overcome physical and mental laziness?
26. How can I help my child become truthful?
27. How can I help my child drop her false standards? She says clothes, books, family, and display of wealth count more in high school and in life than anything else.
28. How can I help my daughter overcome her pessimistic outlook?



29. How can I help my child learn to conquer and be a quick thinker?
30. How can I interest my fourteen-year-old daughter in housework and give her the idea that she must do her small part in the family?
31. Can intelligence be increased by environment?
32. My child (thirteen years old) came home recently and said he liked a certain little girl. How should I answer when he asks, "Is that all right, Mother?"
33. How can I help my daughter take pride in her home, in her appearance, her room, and herself, and take care of her personal belongings?
34. What book or course will help me understand my boy who is a decided introvert?
35. Is too much reading of fiction bad for a boy's mental development?
36. Should a boy who is not making good in college be taken out and sent to work? Are those children handicapped socially who work their way through school?
37. If a child is not making the highest grades, is it wise to explain that some minds are brighter than others?
38. What would you do for an introvert girl of eighteen who is young for her years but is in college?
39. What would you do for a girl of fifteen who hesitates to try any physical activity such as roller skating, or riding a bicycle? Her associates ridicule her for her lack of ability.
40. What would you do with a girl of eighteen, who in her senior year, suddenly falls in love and no longer takes an interest in her grades or old hobbies?
41. Should fraternities and sororities be permitted in high school? Since there is no legal means of ousting them, what can be done?
42. How much should high school girls be allowed to pay for their dresses? Would high school uniforms solve the problem for girls?
43. Where can I get facts or figures to prove to my high school son and daughter that high grades do count? They say only the grinds, the nuts, the oddities make good grades.
44. What literature can be secured, or how can we convince our daughter that this craze for a slim, slender, hipless figure is all wrong?

**HOW MIGHT MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN AVERTED?**

As one reads over this list of questions, one wonders why parents of adolescent children should be confronted by such problems. Could not many of them have been averted through wholesome early adjustments?

If children come into adolescence with unstable emotional attitudes, if they are dependent upon their parents to protect them and to think for them, if they have been browbeaten and cowed by failures, they will find this a period of vacillation, anxiety, and anguish.

But if, during the twelve or fourteen years preceding adolescence, strong, wholesome behavior patterns (habits) have been built in the child, the transition from childhood to young adulthood will be easy, simple, and devoid of acute conflicts. Probably there will be occasional emotional disturbances associated with the physiological changes attending puberty. But these outbursts would be natural and not "carry-overs" of a whole train of failing, faulty habit patterns acquired in early and middle childhood.

If the child has been reared in a home where he has had many opportunities to practice self-control, to depend on his own judgment, to develop initiative and self-reliance; if he has built up many wholesome interests and has experienced the thrills accompanying his own successful adventures and enterprises; if he has learned the value of teamwork, both in the home and school, and has enjoyed the comradeship of parents and teachers; if he has been taught that life is replete with big things for him to do; and if sex-life, with all its potentialities, has been candidly and wisely explained, then there is little need to fear that the unwholesome environment into which he may be thrown at times will wreck him. It will take many exposures to the wrong to destroy behavior patterns that have been built securely into the child's personality. Undoubtedly he will be tempted, probably he may fall occasionally; but right training before adolescence, supplemented by wise, sympathetic, discerning guidance during the adolescent years will preserve the child's character unsullied.

Parents and teachers should then set up such an environment in the pre-adolescent years as will make children towers of strength physically, intellectually, and emotionally. If such wholesome conditions have prevailed, the adolescent years will be simply a gradual expansion of childhood projectings, a branching out of affections to those other than his own family, and a deepening and broadening of his whole intellectual and emotional life.

#### WHAT BIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONINGS OF ADOLESCENCE AFFECT BEHAVIOR?

Certain organic and bodily developments and the marked increase in certain glandular secretions in adolescence have a pronounced influence upon the emotional and intellectual behavior of the adolescent. Though these biological changes come on gradually for the most part, yet their maturation does take place in adolescence. This period, then, represents the "peak" or high tide of the release of energizing forces. It is the florescence period, the bursting into full bloom of whatever of beauty and strength nature has been developing through all the preceding years.

Because adolescence is a period of such fervor and drive (resulting from the organism's freshness of full strength) the emotional and intellectual life of adolescents seems to experience a "burst of speed" when compared to some of the drab performances of preceding years. Metabolism of cell life is greatly speeded up. The endocrine glands seem to discharge more abundantly than at any other period, thus sensitizing every nerve cell and fiber that its secretion bathes. Circulation and respiration are more rapid because heart and lungs feel a stimulus to increased activity.

Probably the sense organs do not become refined by the vigorous energies awakened at adolescence; but the youth becomes more sensitive to their functionings. Because of the effervescence of energy and increased circulation there seems to be a super-sensitiveness of the cells of taste, which respond pleasurably to

tingling stimuli. The youth, at this time, not only develops tastes for new foods but may find pleasure in the use of strong condiments and narcotics.

At this time, the skin seems supersensitive; and stimuli, such as rubbing, patting, and caressing are enjoyed. As a result, the skin receives more attention. Daily baths and strenuous physical exercise in the fresh air and sunshine are not only generators of physical health, but they tend to keep the mind from centering on sex development.

A change in sensitivity to odors is noticed. The adolescent's longing for fragrant flowers, pungent perfumes, and highly scented soaps has a physiological explanation in the increased rate of organic functioning.

Sight also seems to become more discriminating. Power for recognition of numbers is increased, visual judgments are more reliable, and there is a commendable change in the selection and blending of colors.

In fact, there is a general outpouring of abundant energy from all the organs, a phenomenon that makes adolescence physically, intellectually, and emotionally the most promising period in life.

But if there is one instinctive urge more than another that makes its appearance with a "dramatic rush upon life's stage," it is the sex impulse. When one notes the general high-gear state of all organic activity coincident with puberty, it appears that nature intended the human species to have all the exigencies incident to reproduction abundantly provided for.

The sex impulse, as discussed in this chapter, includes much more than the distinct and specific instinctive feelings for coition and reproduction. Nature's rich and continued provision of strength and energy coincident with the maturing of the sex impulse tones the whole of life, manifesting itself chiefly in the fervor and drive it gives to certain physical, intellectual, and emotional interests. Some of these interests peculiarly pertinent to adolescence are expressed in attention to personal appearance; desire to enrich the personality; ambition to excel in public speaking, dramatics, music, athletics, art, and academic honors;

or in any endeavor which will gratify the ego and incidentally make one attractive to the opposite sex. These concomitant or accompanying interests are really off-shoots of the drive of the sex impulse. The adolescent is thus innocently and quite wholesomely finding closely allied outlets for those urgent feelings of energy which accompany the unfolding of the sex emotion. Some call these interests or traits the secondary characteristics of the sex life.

#### WHAT PRONOUNCED SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS ARE COINCIDENT WITH THE PERIOD OF ADOLESCENCE?

The traits discussed in the following pages are not peculiar to adolescence alone, but they do take on new forms of expression in this period; they are more intense in their manifestation and have more improved mechanisms for their use and control. These circumstances make them distinctly different from their manifestation in other periods of life. It is believed that these pronounced characteristics, as well as sociological changes which are the heritage of the adolescent, are the results of biological changes which take place at maturation.

The desire for personal freedom and the impulse of self-assertion. The impulse of self-assertion may be no stronger during adolescence than in some of the preceding years; but it certainly manifests itself in new and pronounced ways. The adolescent is positively jealous of his freedom. His self-assertion at times is exasperating to parents and to teachers. He will neither welcome nor brook any direct interference. He would rather do the thing his way and fail than surrender his new freedom of will. No doubt he feels grown up; he looks grown up; and he rebels at any suspicious and distant attempt to treat him as a child.

Probably more conflicts arise because parents and teachers fail to appreciate this new vision and this zeal for personal freedom of the adolescent than from any other one of his apparent peculiar traits. One sees it reflected in the most frequently mentioned questions of the forty-four—namely, "How can I give more free-



dom to my two adolescent children and yet exercise greater control?" Questions 16, 24, 41, 43, and 44 show a conflict between the self-assertion of the adolescent and the disturbed adult. It is difficult for parents and teachers to accept the fact that the race has learned its lessons, for the most part, through trial and error, and that the adolescent must get much of his strength through experiencing trial, error, and success.

If parents and teachers would give their help in the form of suggestions, making it plain to the adolescent that, if one expects to win, life is a game that has to be played with all the scientific techniques and stored-up knowledge of the past, and that he is expected to play and win on his own initiative, coming for help only when he is in doubt as to which of his many plans is probably the best, they would find that they have given more freedom but at the same time have exercised more control.

Parents never seem quite able to appreciate the fact that it is the child's birthright to learn by trial, error, and success, unless the error promises to be too costly. If the results of his own choice will mar the child's life, then he should be by all means directed, even though a scene is occasioned by ignoring his personal freedom or birthright to self-assertion. But complexities arise when opinionated adults regard any deviation from their own standards as deleterious to the child's welfare.

**Altruism and religious strivings.** The "Children's Crusade" of 1212, in which some 30,000 adolescent and near adolescent boys and girls attempted to reach the Holy Land, is not without its psychological explanation. For, with the maturing of the sex functions and the consequent impetus given to the emotional drives, come demands for many outlets. Religious experiences furnish socially approved outlets for the most impetuous of adolescent emotions. Statistics show that adolescence is the time of most conversions. G. Stanley Hall wrote:

Christianity marks the . . . pivotal point in . . . adolescence where self-love merges in resignation and renunciation into love of man. Religion has no other function than to make this change complete, and the whole of morality may be well defined as life

in the interest of the race, for love of God and love of man are one and inseparable!<sup>1</sup>

The passing from egoism to altruism is hastened in adolescence because the emotional drives are seeking outlets and because these urges are in turn greatly reinforced by the intellectual maturity which helps youth see life in a larger perspective than when it was in the "Big Injun" stage. The appeal of the heroic in the Christ life is irresistible to many young people. They are matured enough intellectually to see their selfish, self-centered selves in challenging contrast to His life of sympathy, service, and sacrifice. Everyone is at some time a zealous reformer, the whole world being his parish.

If this emotional drive and intellectual fervor for criticizing and recreating could be extended to our political, industrial, social, and religious problems, what unprecedented progress could be made in a century! In the degree that each succeeding generation of adults appreciates the enthusiasm of adolescence, helps to lengthen its period, and indirectly shunts youth away from pitfalls due to inexperience, will each succeeding generation move on to higher and richer levels of living. The altruistic yearnings in adolescence are overwhelming in their challenge to parents and teachers.

The need of exposing youth to the highest dreams and aspirations and to the greatest personalities through history, literary masterpieces, music, art, and scientific findings has not gripped the average parent and high school teacher. Too many adults fail to appreciate how wholeheartedly adolescents will throw themselves into a great cause.

**Curiosity and striving for a true philosophy of life.** Curiosity is present in all the years of the pre-adolescent. But his curiosity is easily satisfied in learning and using facts. Not so with the adolescent. His curiosity is of the self-orientation, experimenting, and proving-it brand. This is to be expected, since in the adolescent period there is the most vigorous awakening and

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<sup>1</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1904), Vol. II, p. 304.

growth of both physical and mental powers. These growths mutually reinforce one another. Hence this instinctive urge to explore, curiosity, so pervasive in all the preceding years, now takes on larger and finer manifestations. The intellectual craving to know and to reason out things is stimulated. The glandular secretions probably release much energy, which makes increased attention and prolonged interest possible.

The all-pervasive urge of this impulsive tendency—curiosity—is at times second to no other drive. If properly nourished, it develops interest in varying fields of research, refines personality, and becomes the stimulus that urges men and women on to seek truth and thus push back the frontiers of superstition and ignorance a little farther in each generation. Since few instinctive urges drive the human being to such heights of intellectual and emotional achievements as curiosity, the obligation of parents and teachers to encourage this exploratory, adventurous impulse is outstanding. The recitation period, if it contains the essence of intellectual adventure, struggle, and surprise, is certain to grip the adolescent youth.

The gregarious (gang) impulse. With the awakening of certain physical, intellectual, and emotional powers, coincident with adolescence, come certain social attachments and changes. Parents feel hurt when the child finds his greatest joy in associating with a "gang" of his own age. But the members of his gang are kindred spirits, with similar outlooks on life. The child must have his own social setting. He is here on equal terms with other members of the clan, while in the home he is still treated as a fledgling.

When this gregarious impulse is at its height, the language, style of dress, and customs of his social set are accepted as preferable to those of his parents or teachers. He resents criticism of the standards of his crowd; and the unsympathetic attitude of adults only makes him more loyal to his companions' standards.

The wise adult is both patient and openminded. Unless the customs of the group are positively pernicious, it is undoubtedly

best to let the children work out their own standards. Adults must learn to suggest rather than dictate, or they will drive the children farther afield, possibly into costly and unhappy experiences. Teachers who believe in student participation in government capitalize this gang spirit by encouraging the pupils to make their own standards. With a little wise and sympathetic direction the standards of the group often become much more exacting and ideal than those that teachers and parents would have proposed.

If the home is a democracy, where from infancy the merits of all conduct, both within and without, have been freely discussed, little fear need be felt that the gang, fraternity, or sorority will ruin the child. A few children from such good homes in each crowd will leaven the whole. The task of improving group life is not difficult. A few trained leaders will guide the others.

**The migratory urge.** The wanderlust often leads the adolescent astray because his life is drab and his outlets and interests are few, compared to his energies, his craving for expression, and his emotional urges. When children want to quit school, want to travel, want to go to foreign lands or run away, the adult guardian should recognize these manifestations as indications that certain pronounced impulses are being denied an adequate outlet. To ignore such indications continually will inevitably lead to serious results. Wholesome outlets for this adventurous urge are easily provided. Books of travel and adventure, good movies, excursions in connection with school work, new interests, such as stars, rocks, aviation, chemistry, or biography, camping or "roughing it" expeditions are just a few outlets that might be utilized advantageously.

**Craving for economic independence.** Confidential talks with both high school and college students show conclusively that much of their unrest, many of their introvertive moods, and even pronounced fears owe their origin to such unanswered questions as these: What am I going to do in life? For what am I best fitted? What are my chances to succeed in this or that vocation? What are the chances for promotion in this and that vocation?

The whole problem of moral education, growth in personality, and character improvement—call it what you will—is inextricably interwoven with economics, making a good living, finding a successful and happy vocation.

Thousands of boys and girls who must go to work graduate from high schools each year doubly handicapped. They have neither the necessary training for specific positions compatible with their strength, their tastes or their temperament, nor have they any confidence in their ability to succeed in a new situation. Often these graduates must accept a mediocre position which pays scarcely a living wage, in no way commensurate with the tastes they have developed.

How absurd that these adolescents are educated to enjoy good music, good drama, masterpieces of literature and art, the artistic in home decorations and dress, and yet no provision is made to enable them to enjoy such things once they leave school! Many boys and girls who discover that their miserly wages will not permit indulging in these cultured tastes are thrown into despair. If these young people drift into evil ways, how much is society to blame?

The home and the school could do much to mitigate this dilemma through a cooperative program. If from infancy the child were challenged by activities within his capabilities that appealed to his impulsive urges, he would, through his many successes, develop an aggressive, self-reliant, self-confident, and resourceful attitude toward all new and trying situations. At the same time, by completing varied activities, he could be learning habits of work and techniques that would have a distinct market value. Thus, while at graduation he would not be specifically prepared for any particular vocation, he would have well-developed attitudes and some techniques which would make for success.

#### WHAT PART DOES ENVIRONMENT PLAY IN MAKING THE PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE ACUTE AND COMPLEX?

What effect upon adolescent behavior may result from denying emotional outlets by way of a wholesome environment?



Some of the forty-four questions which these 700 mothers of adolescents asked were: "Should fraternities and sororities be permitted in high school and how can we combat them?" "What shall we do with our introvert children?" "How can I help my child learn to conquer?" "How can I develop the fight and regular boy spirit in my son?" "What can I do with a boy who is restless?" "How can I develop initiative, ambition, and idealism in my boy?" "How can I develop in him a sense of responsibility?"

Could not these problems have been forestalled, or at least their virulence mitigated, if parents and teachers had provided wholesome, stimulating outlets compatible with the emotional urges? For instance, what excuse is there for high school fraternities and sororities, if high school teachers and parents understand adolescents? The urge for group enterprises is strong. It cannot be curbed. If home and school do not supply legitimate, challenging, gripping outlets, the crowd will seek them in its own way. High schools that provide many interesting extra-curricular activities which make the school the center for fun, as well as for work, have little trouble with secret organizations.

We criticize adolescents because they lack initiative, responsibility, and ambition; but what constructive program does the school or home have to offer? If, during pre-adolescent years, no opportunity to practice such traits has been given, is it fair to expect their development, simply because at this particular time the child suddenly attains the physical characteristics of the adult? Out of sympathetically guided experiences and activities come desirable habits. If these interesting, character building activities are denied, what can one expect?

#### WHAT MAY BE THE EFFECT OF FAILURE UPON ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR?

Several of the most acute problems raised by parents of high school students pertain to failure in school, failure in making social adjustments, periods of pessimism and brooding, pronounced introvertive traits, daydreaming, phantasies, lack of

fight, enthusiasm, and spirit. When failure does not affect the child in some depressing manner, we find him registering his feelings in perverse acts, in outbursts of anger, and in sponsoring social and community devilttries.

The need of an environment that will stimulate one to succeed is succinctly stated by Burnham as follows:

The need of success as a wholesome stimulus is universal. Children have an enormous appetite for it. They need larger doses. Adults become depressed without it. It is vital for the normal. The diseased are often cured by it. The modern method in the best hospitals of giving the patient as far as possible interesting work, something worth while to do, has demonstrated its value for health. It is the gravest error for physicians, social workers and teachers not to employ this wholesome stimulus.<sup>2</sup>

#### WHAT ARE SOME CAUSES OF FAILURE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

Failure in high school is often due to the fact that the home does not cooperate by keeping the adolescent physically fit. No teacher can do much for a child who is exhausted in nervous energy because of late parties, irregular hours, improper diet, false standards of living and thinking. Physical health is mandatory, a prerequisite to mental alertness.

Again, because the school does not take care of individual differences, there are often many failures. For that reason there is need of the elastic (contract) assignment. Such assignments give every child his chance to excel, because the several aptitudes and abilities of each child are challenged. If high school students experienced real victories, they would not do so much foolish and fantastic daydreaming.

High school students often fail for another reason, namely, our passion for standardized development. We try to put the students all through the same mold, expecting the same uniform product. There is a crying need for more differentiated courses. We must discard our system of standardized lock-step development and consider the needs of each individual. A derisive but nevertheless pointed analogy illustrating our attempt to develop techniques

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<sup>2</sup> Wm. H. Burnham, *Success and Failure as Conditions of Mental Health* (National Committee for Mental Hygiene, New York City, 1926), p. 11.

and abilities which are almost foreign to the child's nature is found in Dolbear's sarcastic comments. This scientist writes as follows:

In antediluvian times, while the animal kingdom was being differentiated into swimmers, climbers, runners, and fliers, there was a school for the development of the animals.

The theory of the school was that the best animal should be able to do one thing as well as another.

If an animal had short legs and good wings, attention should be devoted to running, so as to even up the qualities as far as possible.

So the duck was kept waddling instead of swimming. The pelican was kept wagging his short wings in the attempt to fly. The eagle was made to run, and allowed to fly only for recreation.

All this in the name of education. Nature was not to be trusted, for individuals should be symmetrically developed and similar, for their own welfare as well as for the welfare of the community.

The animals that would not submit to such training, but persisted in developing the best gifts they had, were dishonored and humiliated in many ways. They were stigmatized as being narrow-minded and specialists, and special difficulties were placed in their way when they attempted to ignore the theory of education recognized in the school.

No one was allowed to graduate from the school unless he could climb, swim, run, and fly at certain prescribed rates; so it happened that the time wasted by the duck in the attempt to run had so hindered him for swimming that his swimming muscles had atrophied, and so he was hardly able to swim at all; and in addition he had been scolded, punished, and ill-treated in many ways so as to make his life a burden. He left school humiliated, and the ornithorhynchus could beat him both running and swimming. Indeed, the latter was awarded a prize in two departments.

The eagle could make no headway in climbing to the top of a tree, and although he showed he could get there just the same, the performance was counted a demerit, since it had not been done in the prescribed way.

An abnormal eel with large pectoral fins proved he could run, swim, climb trees, and fly a little. He was made valedictorian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Amos E. Dolbear, "Antediluvian Education," *Journal of Education*, Vol. 68 (1908), p. 424.

Do not some of our high school courses, because of their prescribed content, standardized methods of presentation, and memoriter test standards produce thousands of failures annually?

#### HOW MAY AN UNWHOLESOME ENVIRONMENT AFFECT ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR?

The adolescent's impulsive tendencies such as self-assertiveness, curiosity, wanderlust, and gregariousness are vigorous. So too are his sex urges. Expose these drives to a stimulating but pernicious environment, and only vicious responses can be expected.

Yet there are thousands of parents either so ignorant or indifferent regarding the dangers of a pernicious, suggestive environment that it is a wonder more immorality has not come to light. Much of the danger in late parties and late automobile rides lies in the fact that after midnight physical resistance is at a low ebb, and with it comes a weakness of mental and moral morale.

Some so-called frontier thinkers believe that out of this license, new freedom, and experimenting, prevalent among a few groups of young people, will come higher and more rational standards regarding the relations of the sexes. They admit, however, that thousands of young people may be ruined by this experimenting before old standards are broken down.

But is all this dangerous experimenting necessary? Have not the experiences of the race throughout the ages given us standards that are not likely to be broken down? Some people condone such experimenting on the theory that young people should determine before marriage whether they have, for a certainty, found their proper mates. Knowing what we do about the strength of habits, especially those that have a deep emotional background, could we expect one who has indulged his emotional impulses in one way for a number of years to forsake, all at once, the old way and be content with something different? Emotional habits, once they are securely formed, are practically beyond eliminating. Their emotional background has tied them up to strong feeling centers whose energizing impetus is so strong that it overpowers all ordinarily acquired habits.

To any group of parents and teachers who will reflect upon the problems incident to such drives as sex, curiosity, self-assertion, migratory and gregarious impulses, a score or more of healthy, wholesome solutions will be found. These urges can be sublimated, turned into closely allied channels. New interests, by way of vocal or instrumental music, orchestra and glee club work, dramatics, painting, landscaping, writing prose or verse, nature study, public speaking, good reading, scholastic achievements, community club work, hiking, scouting, swimming and many kinds of athletic games, together with opportunities to help manage the home or become partners with dad in his work—all these activities, and many more peculiarly indigenous to the community, are just so many wholesome, healthful, and attractive outlets for the characteristic urges. The child must be helped to succeed in his work-life and play-life. He must be helped to build up many wholesome interests before, in some undirected way, he builds up pernicious ones. Adolescent life ought to be most easily managed, because it is responsive, giving all its physical and mental strength to those activities which nourish its propensities.

#### HOW MAY THE PHYSICAL CONDITION AFFECT ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR?

That all kinds and degrees of lack of self-control varying from tantrums to insanity can be traced directly to a run-down physical condition is patent to all thinking parents and teachers. Physical health is a necessary requisite for mental health.

The period of adolescence is, with many, a time of strain and of considerable emotional instability. This condition often originates in the unusually rapid growth of the organism and the new and powerful activity of all its functions. Many adolescents grow so rapidly that little energy is left for anything else. In such cases, nutritious foods, plenty of rest, sound sleep, sunshine, and freedom from worry or excessive mental and physical exertion are positively necessary.

Of all the nervous disorders peculiar to adolescence, the form



known as dementia praecox has aroused the most comment during the last half decade. "Dementia" denotes deterioration of the mind through loss of mental power, and "praecox" means premature. In brief, the disorder is an enfeebling of the previously healthy mind, a declining of mental strength through gradual weakening of the will and deadening of the emotions and mental feelings, ending after a year or so in permanent degeneration of the mind.

#### WHAT ARE SOME SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA PRAECOX?

Henry R. Stedman says on this subject:

Familiarity with the premonitory symptoms of dementia praecox is most important, as it is more than likely to be very helpful toward checking or minimizing further trouble if medical advice is sought in time. Therefore, I shall not apologize for giving them detail. The early indications of the disease, which appear gradually, as a rule, are practically the same whatever form it may afterward assume. In all of my cases, in which intimate knowledge of the earliest manifestations was attainable, lapses in the power of attention—of mental concentration—have come first. An ambitious student complains: "I cannot any longer wield my mind, which has become my master instead of my being master of it"; "I feel no exuberance as before"; "Everything is a dead weight"; "The feeling clings to me and I cannot fight it off." A bright lad, taking high rank in a preparatory school, grows despondent at finding himself becoming "dull," "stupid," and "weak," and begs to be helped, as his utmost endeavors to go on have failed. The girl in this situation feels for the first time that she "must *struggle* to be like other girls." The patient also becomes more easily fatigued physically than before and loses directive energy and initiative. With increasing mental failure the fruitless efforts are soon abandoned, the mind becomes more inactive, forgetfulness, depression and indolence replacing alertness, ambition and energy. He "wants to be let alone," becomes listless, apathetic, and careless, gradually slipping into a dulled condition of mind. Many become overconscientious, depressed and self-reproachful. Avoidance of others follows and paves the way for suspicion of those about them, the starting-point it may be, of future hallucinations, delusions, and overt acts. Suicidal thoughts may now appear. Adolescent patients of another type, when no longer able to meet even the minor demands of life, and

physically fatigued, become easily upset and very irritable, as well as unexpectedly fault-finding and very angry over trifling matters. Marked indecision and constant demand for reassuring regarding the plainest matters of duty are common.<sup>4</sup>

#### WHAT ARE SOME PRECIPITATING CAUSES OF DEMENTIA PRAECOX

The precipitating causes of dementia praecox, as well as of other less fearful nerve disorders, are usually in the nature of exhausting influences, that is, mental and physical strain. For instance, the following conditions bring on this physical and mental strain: Exposing rapidly growing youth to hard, continuous, exhausting labor, such as the poorer children are often forced to undergo; exposing rapidly growing youth to a social life of irregularity of sleep, rest, and diet; exposing an introvert child to failure, whether in books, play, or social accomplishments; exposing a sensitive and delicate youth to a struggle against odds which exhaust his physical strength and, at the same time, humiliate his ego because of the realization that only partial victory is possible; exposing a precocious child to abnormal, exciting, and overstimulating situations in which over-study, in order to win in some contest and come up to his parents' or school's fallacious standards of success, both worries him and causes irregularity in sleep, rest, and diet.

#### CAN DEMENTIA PRAECOX BE PREVENTED?

Stedman, as early as 1915, spoke of there being approximately forty different mental diseases. Like physical diseases, some are more curable than others, while some are inevitably hopeless. He places dementia praecox between the two extremes, that is, in the less curable class, but adds that *this does not mean that it is not preventable*. Experts now believe that many cases of this disease may and can be prevented.

Sir Thomas Clouston, the famous Scotch psychiatrist, believes that the nervous disorders of youth, even dementia praecox, could for the most part be prevented if more attention were paid to

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<sup>4</sup> Henry R. Stedman, *Mental Pitfalls of Adolescence* (The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, New York City, 1928), p. 4.

building up the bone, fat, and muscle of the growing child. He suggests that plenty of fresh air, sunshine, sleep, and nourishing food together with freedom from worry and excitement are the fundamental requisites for a strong body and mind. He discourages stimulating the imagination and higher mental processes of neurotic children. Plumpness, self-control, and orderliness are the three important qualities to develop in them.<sup>5</sup>

### CONCLUSION

1. This chapter is a plea for greater intelligence on the part of parents and teachers regarding adolescent life. We know so much about physical hygiene, so little about mental hygiene. The number and the nature of youthful nervous breakdowns and cases of mental deterioration are appalling.
2. The authors have quoted from experts in the field of mental hygiene. If these quotations stimulate parents and teachers to study carefully the several carefully chosen reading references at the close of this section, then the chapter itself has not been in vain. It is hoped that some day a group of experimenters in the field of mental hygiene will give to youth, in popular language, principles of living that will insure protection against the ravages of many mental diseases now so prevalent and so virulent.
3. The method employed to collect the forty-four questions at the beginning of this chapter is feasible anywhere. The questions themselves are only suggestive, since they were collected in three study groups of parents in three cities only. The nature of the questions will, of course, vary in different communities. But the fundamental causal and remedial factors will be universal.
4. One of the best guarantors of mental health is physical health. During the pre-adolescent years as well as in adolescence, children should have plenty of sleep, fresh air, and wholesome food.

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<sup>5</sup> Stedman, *ibid.*, p. 15.

5. If in the pre-adolescent years the child is successfully and happily making adjustments to his life situations, he will experience few real disturbances in adolescence. Rather will this period be one of happy, thrilling expansions of his preceding years.
6. It is hoped that the discussion of the traits peculiar to adolescence and the suggestions outlined for the continued wholesome growth of these traits will be used as both a preventive and curative measure by parents and teachers.

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### SECTION III

WHAT CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM MIGHT THE HOME  
INITIATE?



## CHAPTER X

### HOW THE LAWS OF LEARNING AFFECT CHARACTER BUILDING

In the two preceding sections the discussion centered upon these two problems: (1) how to initiate and conduct parent-teacher study groups, and (2) how certain kinds of environment operate as causes in certain types of maladjustment. The preceding chapters have made it evident that a remedial character education program must be both curative and preventive. That is, it must do two things—uproot the bad habits, and build good habits. It is the preventive phase, *the habituating of certain desirable traits*, which receives emphasis in this section.

#### WHAT TRAITS SHALL PARENTS AND TEACHERS TRY TO DEVELOP IN CHILDREN?

Below is a list of thirty-three virtues which 603 grade teachers in thirteen different cities of Missouri listed as needing most emphasis in childhood:

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. honesty            | 18. sympathy        |
| 2. cooperation        | 19. courage         |
| 3. accuracy           | 20. respect         |
| 4. initiative         | 21. service         |
| 5. courtesy           | 22. self-confidence |
| 6. cleanliness        | 23. ambition        |
| 7. punctuality        | 24. patience        |
| 8. obedience          | 25. reliability     |
| 9. self-control       | 26. confidence      |
| 10. altruism          | 27. kindness        |
| 11. fairness          | 28. neatness        |
| 12. sportsmanship     | 29. appreciation    |
| 13. creative thinking | 30. forgiveness     |
| 14. thrift            | 31. tolerance       |
| 15. patriotism        | 32. cheerfulness    |
| 16. industry          | 33. generosity      |
| 17. perseverance      |                     |

It is interesting to note that, when 312 high school teachers were asked to name what they considered to be the thirty-three most significant virtues, their list included twenty-seven of the thirty-three just named. The high school teachers added chastity, simplicity, reverence, efficiency, loyalty, and joy in work.

How can these thirty-three virtues and others equally desirable become habituated traits of children? The same laws of learning that facilitate the learning of spelling and arithmetic operate in learning these virtues. If parents and teachers are to be scientific rather than sentimental in their character-education program, if these thirty-three traits are to become enduring habits of children instead of so many symbols to be glibly talked about, then a thorough knowledge and daily *use* of the laws governing all economical learning must command our utmost thought and attention.

What, then, are these laws of learning that govern all habit formation and learning processes? They are usually known as (1) the law of readiness or interest; (2) the law of exercise or practice; and (3) the law of effect, or satisfaction and annoyance.

In this and the two following chapters an attempt has been made to emphasize the significance of these three laws of learning as they affect the inculcation of desirable virtues.

#### HOW DOES THE LAW OF READINESS OPERATE?

A mere knowledge of the virtues to be learned is of little help. The two most important considerations are: (1) What mental state must the child be in to acquire these traits most effectively, and (2) what life situations can be found which will create in the child this necessary mental condition?

The answer to the first question is that the child must be in a state of readiness or interest for the acquiring of the good habit. The law of readiness is: When a nerve bond is ready to act, to do so gives satisfaction, and not to do so gives annoyance. It is when the child is ready, is interested, and keenly desires to realize a certain ideal that there is an approximation of perfect concentration of all his powers in the attempt.



The second step is the creating of an environment or the setting up of situations such that the child will desire the good and will loathe the bad. The problem, then, of teachers and parents becomes that of devising plans and of setting up situations which will make the child desire to develop right habits.

Is the child capable of feeling and desiring the right habit so urgently that he will replace the bad habit with the good? That is, can he and will he, out of his own experiences, learn to desire to be careful instead of careless; can he and will he, upon his own initiative, feel the need of being cooperative rather than selfish? Unless the child is in a state of *readiness*, sees and chooses to change from being careless to being careful, from being selfish to being cooperative, from being impatient to being patient, from being untidy to being tidy, from being extravagant to being thrifty, there is likely to be small growth in these virtues. The child must feel the need of the change so urgently that he will set about making the shift from the old habit to the new. What conditions or situations can make such miracles come to pass? One of the best ways is to allow children to learn, through life situations, the need of certain kinds of habits.

The following incidents illustrate how children learned through experience to appreciate the value and need of several of the virtues such as cooperation, self-control, altruism, thrift, sympathy, service, self-confidence, patience, reliability, confidence, and neatness.

**Situation 1.** The children in the first grade had a painting lesson, and each child had been supplied with paints in a box. When a second painting lesson was scheduled one boy had no paint box. The teacher said to him, "Bobbie, where is your paint box?" In this school each child has a twelve-inch locker with a shelf upon which he is supposed to keep such things. Bobbie said, "My paint box was in my locker when I went home yesterday." "Well," was the reply, "go and look for it." Five minutes passed when a small voice said, "What am I to do? I can't find it." "Bobbie, you may do anything you like, but you cannot take a painting lesson without paints," was the reply. Bobbie took a book and went to a little table, but he watched with envious eyes the other children, busy at painting. The next day

again there was a call for painting, and Bobbie had forgotten all about his paint box. "I have not found my paint box, what am I to do?" "I do not know, Bobbie; but you cannot paint without paints." This kept up for three days, and Bobbie missed his lesson each time. Finally, one of the little girls came up and said to the teacher, "If you would just look at Bobbie's locker you would understand that nobody could find anything in it." The teacher's reply was simply, "Have you told Bobbie about it?" Jane said, "No." "Suppose you do." Nothing had been said to the children in these early weeks of school about orderly arrangement of materials in the lockers. Jane went to Bobbie and said, "Bobbie, if you would straighten out your locker, maybe you could find your paints."

He followed this suggestion and removed everything from his locker. Hidden behind some papers, he discovered his paint box. He brought it to the teacher, who said, "Bobbie, you have missed three days' lessons, haven't you?" "Yes." "Why?" "Well, I guess if I kept my locker in order, I might not have missed the lessons." She said, "I think that is true." Then said Bobbie, with a very proud air, "I am not the only one with an untidy locker." "No," was the answer, "but you were the only one who could not find his paint box." Then she went to the piano and struck a chord. After the children were quiet, she pointed to the pile of things from Bobbie's locker and asked them what they thought of it. The children then discussed the value of orderly arrangement of their lockers. They finally decided on a plan of writing an honor roll for orderly lockers. Orderliness, growing out of real needs, is one of the moral lessons that may be taught in every first grade.<sup>1</sup>

This incident is a splendid example of how children, through one of their own *life situations*, saw clearly and felt keenly the results of a bad habit. It illustrates beautifully how even six-year-olds will set about to replace the bad habit with a good one. Here one sees in action the best method of character development, namely, children choosing and practicing the right, after they have seen the folly of the wrong.

**Situation 2.** The second case is that of an impatient, high-strung five-year-old. One day the little fellow traced the picture of a squirrel on bass wood and was very anxious to cut it out

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<sup>1</sup> Progressive Education Association, Bulletin No. 4 (Feb., 1921), pp. 4-5.

with his scroll saw and show it to his friends. He was working vigorously; the job was just about done. The tail alone remained to be cut. The father, passing through the child's work room, observed how impatiently and vigorously the boy was using his saw. He said, "Son, that board will break, and off will go your squirrel's tail, if you are not more careful. Don't you see how thin and weak that wood is?" To this caution, the child impatiently replied, "Oh, no it won't, Dad; and anyway, I'm in a hurry."

The father said no more but left the room. Not two minutes later cries of dire despair and broken-hearted wails were heard from the adjoining room. The child's impatience and violent jerking of the saw had been too big a strain on the thin material. The squirrel's tail had snapped. The work of a whole morning lay in ruins; the hopes and dreams of hours of anticipated joy were frustrated. When the worst of the crying was over, father and son had a quiet talk about the need of being patient, and of proceeding cautiously and carefully when doing anything. Out of this *life situation*, with its attendant bitterness, the boy learned at first hand the value of this virtue, felt its need, and was helped thereafter to try to supplant impatience and recklessness with patience and reason.

**Situation 3.** The other day a certain father, mother, and their two sons, eight and six years old, went to the county fair. Each boy was given fifty cents as his spending money for the day. The father warned both of them that, when they had spent their money, there would be no more forthcoming. The older boy was especially admonished, for he had always spent his money recklessly (his father had not curbed him but had always had an extra nickel for him).

In less than an hour after reaching the fair grounds, the older lad was back, sheepishly asking for just five cents more. He was so hot and an ice cream cone would help! When asked what he had done with his fifty cents, he pulled out of his pockets whistles that would not whistle, tops that would not spin, and balloons that would not fly. His whole outlay was not worth five cents.

The father firmly refused to give him another penny. With the help of his wife, he kept his word the whole day. It was anything but a holiday for father and son. There were many tears and tense moments but profitable conferences as the child came to see that "we cannot eat the cake and have it too." Before night he felt keenly that his habit of reckless extravagance had made this a most unhappy day for himself and his parents. Out of this

*life situation* came an aversion on the child's part for unthinking spenders and for grafters in general. In the months that followed, he consistently tried to make "good buys," as he called them, and often challenged his father to get more for his money than he had.

We complain that our children are extravagant and that they have no sense of the value of money. We call them spendthrifts; and we waste hours lecturing them because of their indifference. But do we take advantage of life situations to help them appreciate the value of the cardinal virtues we are so anxious for them to possess?

Probably parents spend entirely too much time talking about the value of good habits as a *future* necessity. Children are living in the immediate present; and they appreciate the value of thrift, carefulness, orderliness, and patience only as they feel the need of them in their everyday life. There is no more effective way to learn than through one's experiences. Out of one's experiences come one's clearest meanings, deepest insights, and lessons not soon to be forgotten. Our experiences teach us much because they are *our* experiences. Thus they cause us to stop, look, and listen, with our attention focused upon our success. The pain or pleasure is thus felt to its fullest, because it is personal. The emotionalized habit here has its origin.

#### HOW DOES THE LAW OF EXERCISE OR PRACTICE AFFECT HABIT FORMATION?

Desire alone, regardless of how intense and earnest it may be, will not lead to a change in conduct. At best it only indicates a readiness for change.

Character is the sum total of one's habits and is shown in the way one thinks, feels, and acts in the manifold situations of life. But how are these attitudes and habits which constitute character built into the child's nervous system? It is here that one must turn for partial explanation to the law of exercise or practice: namely, when a nerve connection is *used*, it becomes strengthened; when not used, it becomes weakened. These nerve con-

nections, like the muscles of the arms, grow by use, exercise, or practice. The key word is action. It is the source of mental, physical, and spiritual growth.

The home and school would do well to adopt Kilpatrick's<sup>2</sup> threefold aim in character education. The first and immediate aim to be set up by parents and teachers is good conduct; the second or intermediate aim is good character; and the third or remote aim is good conduct. For good conduct in early childhood will insure good character in early manhood; and good character in early manhood will in turn result in good conduct throughout life. Through practice we make our habits; and our habits in turn make us. Thus habits constitute character.

#### HOW DOES THE LAW OF EXERCISE OPERATE?

But how can parents and teachers feel certain that good conduct in childhood will ripen into good character and that this good character will later beget good conduct in adult living? This process is assured through the application of the law of practice or exercise. What you would have in character, practice in conduct.

For example, take the case of a child who has a desire to be careful instead of careless with his playthings. Before carefulness can become a part of his nervous system, he must practice being careful many times in all his relations with these toys. At first it will mean paying strict attention to all those movements and successive steps necessary in putting away his toys in a systematic manner. But soon he will find that his hands and feet have become willing servants of his nervous system. All necessary movements having become habits—*i. e.*, actions done without thinking, attention, or force of guidance—the room will be tidied and toys arranged in an orderly way, while his mind may be occupied with far-away things. We say that he is now acting from sheer force of habit. We say that he is a careful, tidy child. But in truth *he* is not tidy. *It*—his habits—are careful and tidy.

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<sup>2</sup> Wm. H. Kilpatrick, *Foundations of Method*, pp. 311-326.



Through practice, the child has made his own the desirable trait of tidiness with toys.

But it is too much to expect the child to desire and to practice the right for right's sake. He is interested in living, not in moralizing. The child's guardians should, in so far as possible, seize those crucial life situations which will call the child's attention to the need of change, and then set up an environment which will give him a chance to make habitual the much needed virtue.

Some parents and teachers believe that character is inherited. Certain characteristics may be inherited, but even they can be changed by environment. Character is attained by building.

How does the child learn that two and two make four? Only after he has been exposed and has responded several times to the situation will there be built up a nerve connection between the stimulus, 2 and 2, and the response, 4. Learning is a process of building up a series of nerve connections between the object or stimulus and some reaction or response which gives the stimulus its meaning.

Take a little nine-months-old baby girl who is learning to wave "bye-bye." How does she learn it? How is the meaning, that is, the handwaving response, ever attached to the sound of "bye-bye"? Perhaps several times each day for two or three weeks the little baby sees mother and friends wave—make certain movements with the hand. At the same time she hears a certain jumble of pleasing sounds. Possibly the mother takes the baby's hand and moves it up and down to help her imitate the trick. After a few days the baby associates the sound of "bye-bye" with a certain movement of the hand. Now, we say, she has learned to wave "bye-bye." What has really happened is that a series of interrelated nerve connections has been made between the nerve paths leading from the eye to the sight center in the brain, from the ear to the sound center in the brain, then to still another center, the motor, which connects the muscles in arm and hand.

Thus learning to do things is simply making a physiological nerve connection between some stimulus and a certain response.

There is nothing mysterious about morality. The child learns habits of right living and exemplary citizenship in the same manner that he learns to wave bye-bye, to roller skate, or to read—mainly through right practice.

#### HOW MAY LIFE SITUATIONS BE UTILIZED TO DEVELOP CHARACTER?

The opportunities for character building through right practice inherent in the everyday life situations in the home are strikingly significant.

Ned, a seven-year-old boy, was continually starting the day wrong because he could not get his few morning chores done before school time. Admonitions to hurry were of no avail, reprimands and punishment made no lasting impression.

At last he and his mother talked the matter over in a sincere endeavor to discover the cause of the trouble and to find some means of adjustment which would be satisfactory to both. There was no doubt in the boy's mind about the fairness of his accepting these responsibilities in the home democracy.

In the course of the conversation, Ned said that it took him so long to dress that he didn't have time to tidy his room or to feed his dog. It seemed, then, that dressing was the crucial life situation. His mother explained to him how, by systematic arrangement of his clothes the night before, he could wash, clean his teeth, and dress in twenty minutes. (He had been taking anywhere from thirty to sixty minutes.)

Ned accepted the challenge and decided to make a chart whereon he daily checked himself on the three life situations concerned—namely, dressing in twenty minutes, tidying his room, and feeding his dog. He called the chart his "Record of Achievements." Whenever a chore was done *on time*, he gave himself a red star.

Furthermore, Ned agreed that, since these were very important chores to be done, he should receive some "reminder" if he "forgot." He felt the justice of reasonable punishment. Other members of the family cooperated by racing with him in dressing,

challenging him to find their rooms in disorder, or their chores undone.

The results were most gratifying to the entire family, and Ned was happy in his successes. At the end of six weeks, the doing of these chores was so nearly a matter of routine that Ned suggested that he make a new achievement card and check other "chores."

A picture of Ned's progress for the first two weeks is presented:

RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENTS

FIRST WEEK								
CHORE	SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	TOTAL
Dress in 20 minutes.....	★	★			★			3
Tidy room.....	★			★	★		★	4
Feed dog.....	★		★		★	★	★	5
SECOND WEEK								
CHORE								
Dress in 20 minutes.....		★		★		★	★	4
Tidy room.....	★	★			★	★	★	5
Feed dog.....	★	★		★	★		★	5

Many and varied are the life situations in every home which may be used as a means whereby the child acquires through practice such desired virtues as neatness, reliability, sportsmanship, cooperation, self-control, punctuality, and fairness.

#### HOW CAN APPARENT SUDDEN BREAKS WITH RIGHT BE EXPLAINED?

We sometimes see cases when people who have heretofore lived exemplary lives suddenly commit some crime; and everyone remarks, "How strange that he should fall after all these years of right living!" But is the break with right so sudden after all?

A bank president who embezzled half a million dollars from his bank by padding the accounts has since said, again and again, that he did not mean to be a thief. But for months previous to his dishonest deed he allowed himself to think and plan how easily he could withdraw money from the bank funds, buy acres of cheap land in a neighboring state, stock the ranch with a few thousand choice cattle, fatten them for the high market, make a big profit, and return the money to the bank. No one need know anything about it; no one would suffer; and he would be the richer by thousands of dollars. But disease seized his cattle; the bottom fell out of the market; the state auditor detected fraudulent accounts; and in a prison cell the banker reflected.

Was this man thoroughly dishonest? Did he fall suddenly? Certainly not. What a man sows in thought-life he will reap in action. This banker had allowed the nerve paths of crooked and irregular banking methods to be used secretly for months in his thought-life. The bonds were established, the habit became fixed and strong, so that all that was needed to touch it off was a stimulating situation, such as a rise in the stock market. No man or woman ever yielded to a tempting situation all at once. It is physiologically impossible. The overt acts are committed secretly in thought-life a thousand times before they are manifested in action.

Probably the prize fool of the age is that student who fancies that he can for years form bad habits of study, engage in questionable practices and escapades, and then, on entering college, right about face, get down to business, and carry off honors as a scholar and exemplary citizen. What is securely built by practice in the nerve cells is not so easily uprooted.

#### HOW DOES THE LAW OF EFFECT INFLUENCE HABIT BUILDING?

The third step in building desirable habits is to see that the child *practices* doing the right *with satisfaction*. Faults are corrected by substituting the right habit for the wrong one. The child must not only *be ready* to replace wrong habits with the right, and *practice* the right, but he must get *satisfaction* in prac-

ticing the right. Growth in character is assured only when the child chooses and does the right upon his own initiative. The elements of fear and coercion must be absent.

How can we feel assured that the child will choose and practice the right rather than the wrong which he has been doing so long? Our assurance depends upon his getting an even greater thrill, pleasure, and satisfaction out of doing the right than he previously got out of doing the wrong. The newly chosen way must give him satisfaction. He must feel that it is manly, big, and worth while. He must feel that to do otherwise is cowardly, petty, and untrustworthy. In short, *wrong doing must annoy; right doing must satisfy.*

Some factors that will operate to insure satisfaction in right practice are:

1. An application of correct moral concepts and ideals set up before him.
2. Daily freedom to make choices between the wrong and the right.
3. Daily opportunity to judge his own choices.
4. Daily evaluation of the wisdom of his choice by the group in school or the parents in the home, with judicious praise when the best choices are made.

#### HOW DOES PRACTICING WITH SATISFACTION INFLUENCE CONDUCT?

It is true that many undesirable habits may be strengthened because the child practices them with satisfaction. In many homes, the little child is stimulated to do what he knows is wrong, because of his satisfaction in seeing mother fly into a rage, to hear dad storm about, or to see the little sister have a tantrum. As long as a child gets pleasure from the results of his deeds, he is going to continue his course of action.

An illustration taken from a junior high school principal's log-book shows how a class that practiced misbehaving because it gave the members satisfaction changed noticeably when their



antics no longer caused annoyance. One day a seventh-grade teacher left her class and, rushing into the principal's office, declared she was through teaching. Before he had time to make any reply, she broke down completely. She was given a few weeks' rest; and during her absence the principal and two other teachers took her work.

Investigation revealed the fact that this particular seventh grade was a very boisterous, noisy, discourteous, and disobedient class that had derived great satisfaction in worrying its teacher and making her almost frantic by its escapades.

When the principal went to the room, he explained that Miss —— would be absent for a few weeks and that, in the meantime, he would take part of the work. He at once made an assignment. On being called to the office, he informed the group that he might be absent half an hour. He expressed faith and trust in their ability to take care of themselves and asked only that any misbehavior be reported to him upon his return. Said the principal, "I was not halfway to my office when bedlam broke loose in that room. I had a mind to go back and straighten out the whole gang; but upon second thought decided to experiment with them."

When he returned at the end of thirty minutes, he said, "I thought once that I heard a little disturbance in this room. Maybe I was mistaken. If any one forgot and was noisy, will he please hold up his hand?" Not a hand went up. Without further remarks they plunged into the lesson. At the end of the period, another assignment was made; again he placed them on their honor and left the room.

These tactics were continued for several days; and, although the pupils were assured that there would be no punishment or reprimand for self-confessed misbehavior and that the only honorable thing to do was to admit mistakes and try to remedy them, there was little apparent change in conduct. At times, the principal felt that he must return and stop the riot and tell them what cowardly, yellow boys and girls they were; but he stuck to his original purpose of setting up ideals, giving the pupils a chance

to choose and to judge their own conduct, and refusing to let them derive satisfaction from the effects upon him of their misbehavior.

By the middle of the second week there was much less noise in the room when he left; but still there was no response to the daily query, "Did anyone forget to be quiet?" By the end of the second week he sensed a change in the attitude of the group. On returning to the class one day he put the usual question. For a few seconds there was an ominous silence; then one of the largest boys in the group blurted out, "Yes, I acted up"; and, turning to three or four others, he challenged them to tell the truth too. The principal congratulated these boys for the choice they had made. From that time on, the room was a changed place.

In the weeks that followed, the pupils enjoyed practicing the right as much as they had formerly enjoyed practicing the wrong. There was real growth in character. They made and judged their own choices. The ideals of fair play, right living, faith, and trust were daily before them in the personality of the principal. The injustice of their betrayal of confidence and faith made their bad conduct so annoying that satisfaction could be gained only in doing the right.

#### HOW DOES SATISFACTION HELP TO STRENGTHEN HABIT PATTERNS?

Practice alone does not ensure economical learning. Recall the hours that, as a child, you were forced to spend in word drills, in reading, in arithmetic drills, in studying the rules of grammar and spelling; yet how little you learned in comparison with the time spent! Why? Was there not practice enough and to spare? Think of the hours spent in going through certain physical exercises, such as swinging Indian clubs or dumb bells; and yet weeks of practice developed neither accuracy nor grace. Why? Was there not practice enough?

A mother, who was an immaculate housekeeper and always

made her two boys keep their rooms in apple-pie order, could never understand why, as adults in their own homes, they were so untidy and unsystematic. They had had much practice. What was lacking? Parents vigilantly try to build up habits of cleanliness in their children, seeing that neck and ears are washed, teeth cleaned, and clothes kept in good condition. It discourages them to find that, if the children are not admonished daily, these little chores are neglected. Why has the habit not been established? Certainly there has been daily practice.

All these instances suggest several reasons for failure; but chief among them is that there was little *practicing with satisfaction*. The child was not interested. He did the thing because he was told to, not because he was interested in the results. He got no thrill, "kick," or satisfaction out of the performance, except that he was glad when it was over.

To succeed in the building of character, the child must feel the need of certain habits. Next, he must practice these with satisfaction, or feel annoyance when he does not practice them. If the word drill makes it possible for him to read his favorite story; if success in number work means he can be the store-keeper; if the Indian club drill is to prepare for some public exhibition; if milk, carrots, and spinach are going to help him come up to the standards in weight, height, and strength; if clean hands and nails help his room win the banner; if a tidy room not only brings praise from his parents and the neighbors but also enables him to find his toys quickly; if these and other pertinent satisfying elements attend his successes, and if annoyance attends his failures, the parent and teacher may rest assured that the child will practice the right upon his own initiative.

We like to do the things we can do well. Usually we do well the things we like to do. If one excels in golf but is a poor tennis player, he wants to talk and play golf; but he registers a sphinx-like silence regarding tennis and he is seldom to be found near the courts. If one excels in cooking, sewing, music or art, one will do those things and neglect others. But how does liking to do

a certain thing help us do it better? How does this condition of satisfaction help us acquire more quickly and more effectively the desired habit? There are several reasons, among which the following are outstanding:

1. When satisfaction is felt in connection with the practice of some act, we tend to respond in that way again and again, and every repetition strengthens that particular nerve bond or habit pattern.
2. These repeated uses of this same nerve pattern break down resistance in the path, making it more likely that the response to the stimulus will be repeated.
3. When pleasure attends the use of a nerve path, there is probably an emotional set of interest and readiness of all thoughts and movements closely related to this particular nerve path.
4. Satisfaction insures a desire, an interest, a readiness upon the part of the learner, which is itself a means of concentration.

#### HOW DO LIFE SITUATIONS GIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTICE WITH SATISFACTION?

In the home and in the school the child is daily face to-face with problems which must be met. Whether he comes out of these conflicts with desirable virtues strengthened depends largely upon whether he practiced with satisfaction.

Humanity is prone to criticize and condemn, but to say little about successes. A little girl's behavior at the table may be exemplary for weeks at a time without eliciting a word of praise. But let her accidentally upset a glass of milk upon the clean table cloth, and what a tirade she brings down upon her head!

The value of success, of praise, and of approval in character building have been repeatedly stressed. Let us reiterate. One of the surest ways of stimulating the child to acquire such traits as fairness, courage, tolerance, cheerfulness, sympathy, and thrift is to see that in his life situations he gets much satisfaction in

practicing them. From the baby in the home to the man in business, the law of effect applies. There will always be readiness and a desire to do those things which bring satisfaction.

A boy of eight was cutting a rather large lawn. The day was hot, the task distasteful, and the lad was wasting much time. Finally the father went out and said, "Son, you won't have any time to play ball with the boys this morning at this rate. Why don't you keep at the job?" "I'll never get done," was the discouraged reply. "Just look, I've been around ten times and you'd never know it."

The father appreciated the child's viewpoint. "Well, son," he said, "let's do it in parts and see how soon you can get each part done," and he marked off a small section. The father returned to the house but was soon hailed by the joyous cry, "I've finished it, Dad. Just see how much I've done."

The rest of the lawn was taken in sections and soon cut by a cheerful child. He could see results in the small plots. Success was not too far remote. The boy was "finishing" with satisfaction.

A teacher and a bright fourth-grade group decided that each member should read at least forty books during the semester. This meant that more than two books must be read every week. Several pupils got behind, became discouraged, and wanted to quit. The teacher showed them how easy it would be for them to catch up again, and purposely selected some short, easy books for them to read next. In a few days their morale was again restored; they were winning.

The opportunities for practicing with satisfaction desirable character traits as they arise in the life problems of the children are unlimited in their possibilities. The wise teacher and parent often "frame" situations to insure success. If in his daily adjustments, the child repeatedly finds satisfaction in being honest, obedient, reliable, industrious, thrifty, fair, accurate, and generous, he is slowly but none the less surely making these traits an integral part of his personality.



## CONCLUSION

1. The correction of faults means the replacing of bad habits by good habits.
2. The child must *want* to do the right. He must feel the need of changing from the wrong, if growth in character is to be permanent. But the child must have a feeling urge, or mental set known as readiness, for the good before he acts economically to acquire the good.
3. This attitude can and will be developed, if out of the child's own life experiences he is made to feel a disgust for the wrong habit and is helped to see how he is the loser by practicing it.
4. Merely theoretical talking and reasoning with a child about the value of good habits are of little value. On the other hand, we need not let a child burn himself before we tell him that the stove is hot. The best results will be attained if vigilance, warning, and explanation are closely associated with experience.
5. After a child has met a situation, sympathizing and reasoning with him to show why he succeeded or failed will help in the development of emotionalized repulsions toward the bad habit and of impelling desires for choosing and practicing the right one.
6. Growth in character comes as does growth in handwriting, spelling, or arithmetic. It is chiefly a matter of *practicing* the right so often that the nerve connections which give the desired response become firmly bonded.
7. If we would have children learn to be tidy, careful, patient, honest, courteous, fair, and kind, then we must provide them with many life situations which will afford much practice over definite nerve paths. Thus will the desired connections be made and the habits firmly formed.
8. For effective, economical development of character traits the child must not only desire to build up a certain habit and practice it, but he must practice with satisfaction.

9. Satisfaction in achieving commendable results will guarantee that the child will make right choices.
10. Undesirable conduct may result because of getting satisfaction in practicing it. Children will make changes when the old type of response no longer is satisfactory.
11. By rewarding the new, desired response and attaching annoyers to the undesired response, parents and teachers can stimulate the formation of desirable habits.
12. Parents, teachers, and the social group should aid in the functioning of the law of satisfaction by praising all attempts of the child to make right choices.
13. If these principles of character training are practiced during the first twelve years of a child's life, he will not only have formed thousands of specific good habits but, what is of much greater value, will have acquired certain "mental sets," "attitudes," and concepts for right conduct that will carry over into all life situations.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PLACE OF COERCION IN THE RECTIFICATION OF FAULTS

A very popular method of attempting to help children correct their faults is through coercion. "What is it?" "When shall it be used?" "How shall it be used?" are questions that trouble parents.

#### WHAT IS COERCION?

Let us define coercion by saying that it is a state or condition whereby one party is forced to do something against his will. If one is compelled by another, either directly or indirectly, to do something that he otherwise would not have done, he is being coerced. The kinds of coercion by parents are legion, varying all the way from a mild, firm suggestion to a severe flogging. Threats, frowns, bitter rebukes, scolding, denying one privileges, sending one to bed or out of the room are all different types of coercion.

In a significant sense coercion is an attitude of mind on the part of the one coerced. For example, a fifteen-year-old boy, who has openly disobeyed his widowed mother by going out with a rough gang, leaves the gang and comes home. What compelled or coerced him to change his mind? Some call it conscience. It may have been his sense of fair play, of honorable and unselfish conduct, coupled with his love for his mother, that drove him home. There seem to be as many forms of coercion as there are situations causing us to do something we would rather not do. It may be a mental picture of a mother at prayer, or it may be fear of the gallows.

#### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COERCION IS USED?

What happens when we force good conduct? Will the result be good character? Will good conduct be practiced thereafter

without coercion? Will one do the right in the future upon his own initiative?

There are at least three possible outcomes to forcing good conduct upon the child any one of which may result: (1) a slight desirable growth; (2) an undesirable growth; and (3) a pronounced desirable growth in character.

**A slight desirable growth.** Possibly an illustration will best indicate under what conditions one may expect a slight desirable growth in character as a result of coercion. A father comes home from the office unusually tired, irritable, and discouraged. Unfortunately, the children are unusually noisy. Finally, the father's nerves can endure the confusion no longer. Dropping his newspaper, he turns to his wife and says, "Mother, if you cannot make these children be quiet, I can!" The glares which he bestows upon the youngsters bring quiet. But is there growth in character? Are the children practicing good conduct out of consideration for their father's tired nerves or out of prudence? Forcing good conduct in this manner develops very little growth in character. There is, in truth, some growth, because certain nerve paths will not be in such a state of readiness the next evening, since they were denied practice tonight. But such character growth is one of negation, and in most instances it is almost negligible.

**An undesirable growth.** Attempting to force good conduct upon a child over four or five years of age often results in a vicious development. A colleague relates the following incident. He and his wife were giving a little dinner party. The wife was preparing dinner while the husband and their five-year-old son were entertaining the guests. The father tried to get the boy to sit down and look at a book, but the child wanted to help with the entertaining. He proceeded to get out all his toys, ring bells, play horns, and ride his tricycle over the toes of the visitors. To the frowns and scowls of his father he gave no heed. Finally, the little fellow said, "Let me play you my new Mother Goose Record." On his way to the victrola the father tried to check him by a vicious twitch of the arm; but the child was not to be

thwarted from his purpose. Breaking loose, he proceeded to get his record.

At this moment the father observed the smile on the faces of his guests. He could stand it no longer; excusing himself, he seized the boy and took him upstairs. There he proceeded to relieve his pent-up anger by shaking and spanking the unruly youngster. Finally, he dashed him into a chair, telling him to stay there until he learned how to behave. But no sooner had he taken his hand off the child than the boy bounced and tore into his father like a young tiger, biting, scratching, hitting, and kicking. The child, as well as the father, had lost his self-control.

Hearing the confusion, the mother rushed up and separated the two. The husband returned to the guests, while the child tried to redeem himself by helping his mother in the kitchen. (It might be said in passing that, if this child had been provided with a playroom wherein he could do the things he wanted to do, he would have been satisfied to greet the guests and then return to his own activities.)

In this incident we have a splendid example of the vicious results which sometimes come from attempting to force good conduct upon a child. In far too many instances drastic, coercive methods bring destructive, vicious results. A few such evenings would cause a child to hate his father and to detest his home.

**A pronounced desirable growth.** Positive growth in character results only when a child is truly sorry for his bad conduct. If a child shows evidence of being truly repentant after punishment, one may feel assured that coercion has helped.

#### WHEN SHOULD COERCION BE USED?

The three possible outcomes of coercion make the question, "When shall we coerce?" most vital. By what criterion shall we judge whether forcing good conduct upon a child will develop desirable character traits? The answer depends upon the way in which the child reacts to the punishment. If he feels that he is being unjustly treated or that his individuality is not being respected, or if he fears the one punishing him because of his



superior strength, then undesirable results are likely to ensue. But if the child feels that the punishment is just and the direct outcome of his misdemeanor, a constructive growth is a possibility.

When shall we spank children? Generally speaking, if one must resort to corporal punishment, let him use it on the child before he is old enough to discriminate between the justice or injustice of the punishment. In these early years the child thinks of the punishment as the direct result of his misbehavior. The following illustration may show how easily associations are formed in early childhood. A little ten-months-old boy was sitting on the floor. At the moment that a beautiful white rabbit entered the room, a pistol was fired off. His response was one of tense, nervous fear. This same situation occurred daily for one week. At the end of that time the rabbit *alone* was presented. The baby exhibited fear and turned in the direction from which the sound had come. Next day the pistol was fired off but no rabbit was presented. Again he showed fear and turned to look for the rabbit. The rabbit and the sound were indelibly associated in his mind. He felt that they belonged together, that they were one. Such an association could scarcely be formed with a child of five or six years.

And so it is with punishment. If a very young child's hands are smartly slapped when he tries to turn on the gas, he associates the pain with the stove and thinks of the slap as being the direct, just outcome of touching the stove, and thus learns to leave it alone. If we would do most of our spanking before the child is five years of age, there would be need of little thereafter. It is during these years that associations are readily made. If the child's hands are slapped when he touches certain pieces of furniture, valuable pottery, china or ornaments, he soon learns to leave them alone.

However, in later years, he is likely to observe that often there is little reasonable connection between his bad conduct and the punishment. Rather will he detect that punishment resulted when mother had frayed nerves or father lost his temper. Prob-

ably mother received a social cut at the bridge party or father failed to sell some bonds. Conduct which on other occasions was condoned or ignored, tonight brings harsh punishment. A few years earlier, even coercion, under these circumstances, would have been associated with the misbehavior; and there would have been no vicious growth in character. But now the child knows differently; he senses and resents the injustice of the punishment and thus is worse off for it.

#### HOW SHALL COERCIVE METHODS BE EVALUATED?

Coercion, therefore, is seen to have possibilities for either the creation or the destruction of character. It is a drastic method, sometimes justifiable. Coercion should be used as a last resort in arresting a child from wrong practices; but it should be followed by more constructive schemes of rectification, when the child is in a receptive mood.

On pages 126-128 is a list of questions from parents. Some of their problems are: "Shall I make my girl take music lessons?" "Shall I make my son keep his room tidy?" In answering either question one should ask, "Has the child the innate ability to perform the task assigned? Has he been approached frequently in a sympathetic and reasonable manner about this work?" If the answer to both questions is "yes," then coercion is entirely justifiable, because in both instances the children will soon feel success and see results for their efforts. They will eventually begin to practice the music or tidiness with satisfaction. In such instances coercion is the agent only until the situation itself develops a more pleasing but none the less powerful stimulus.

What, then, shall be our attitude toward coercion? Considering the practices in the home and the school as a whole, it would seem that coercion probably fails more often than it succeeds in building permanent desirable character traits. In short, coercion is, as a rule, a poor way of getting things done. In most instances, especially if the children are over four or five years of age, we ought to confess failure when we have to resort to coercion. With children who are old enough to reason, it should be used only to

arrest them in some vicious practice or to help them over the first unattractive features of a new undertaking.

This view of coercion just set forth is usually unpopular with parents. Too many of them have a tyrannical attitude and want meek, unquestioning obedience. It pleases their vanity to feel that children are afraid to disobey. They do not realize that, in such instances, obedience is of little value. They do not feel that their children, as members of a democratic institution, have a right to voice their opinions and to act upon their own choices. Again, the ease with which a sound spanking can be administered and immediate, apparently desirable results obtained makes coercive methods attractive. A spanking can be given in a few seconds; "talking it over" may take much longer. But which should be the chief consideration—the immediate or the ultimate outcome?

#### CONCLUSION

1. Coercion is a popular method used by many parents and teachers in attempting to rectify children's faults.
2. Any device which forces a child to stop what he is doing or to do something he does not want to do is coercive.
3. The outcomes of coercive methods may be a slight desirable change, an undesirable change, or a pronounced desirable change.
4. The attitude with which the child receives the punishment determines whether the outcomes will be desirable or harmful.
5. If the child feels that the punishment is unjust or is the result of parental displeasure rather than the natural outcome of his misdemeanor, undesirable results are likely to follow.
6. Coercion is effective when the child feels that his punishment is the direct result of his deed.
7. If coercive methods of disciplining are to be used, they should be used on the very young child, who easily associates the punishment with the misdeed.

8. Coercive methods are justifiable with older children to get them to stop and realize the seriousness of their misbehavior, if reasoning or other constructive methods have failed to get results, or to tide them over the first uninteresting stages of a new undertaking.
9. Undoubtedly, coercion is used much too frequently. The parent or teacher who has to resort to it often should feel that he is failing in helping the child make wholesome social adjustments. Possibly its popularity is due largely to the fact that it is easily administered, does not take much time, and is, at the same time, an outlet for the overwrought nerves of the teacher or parent.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HOME AS THE CRADLE OF DEMOCRACY

#### WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL MEANING OF DEMOCRACY?

"When shall we have a democracy in America?" asked a thoughtful teacher of her high school civics class, and without exception the whole class voted that we have it already; for democracy is a form of government and a manner of election where the majority rule. But in the succeeding lessons they learned that

Democracy is not simply a political system; it is a moral movement and it springs from adventurous faith in human possibilities. With all its futilities, blunders, and tragic ineptitudes, we must everlastingly believe in it, for unsuspected possibilities in common folk do appear when the doors of opportunity are opened wide.<sup>1</sup>

But when and where will our children learn that democracy is a spirit of human love for fair play, instead of a form of government; know it as an attitude of mind for service, instead of a machinery for spoils; think of it as an inner urge to live and let live, rather than as political promises and platitudes of a party? For all laws and legislators, government and governors, are at best only means of expressing the spirit of democracy.

#### WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF DEMOCRACY?

If we are ever to have a democracy in spirit, as well as in form of government, we must have a sincere belief in it, not only as to its desirability, but as to its possibility. Belief in democracy necessitates belief in the possibilities of man to visualize and live a democracy. Jesus, more than any other, had this vision. He saw men and women in terms of their possibilities. He had faith

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion* (Harper and Bros., 1926), p. 36.



in man's creativity and power of self-realization, regardless of station. There are some who profess to believe that peace on earth, good will, fair play, and square dealing can never be realized in the life of man, because of such inborn tendencies as fighting, rivalry, greed, self-assertion, and cruelty. But they forget that the direction which any impulse takes is largely dependent upon the environment to which it is exposed.

For example, if a child is exposed from infancy to a life of greed, sordid business practices, lying, "doing the other fellow," unprincipled rivalry, tactics of the life of the jungle in crushing out the other fellow, most assuredly those inborn tendencies to fight, to collect, to rival, and to assert will be developed to the utmost in ways unwholesome to the rest of society. If, on the other hand, children are encouraged from infancy to try to outdo all others in achieving something big, honorable, and worth while for the home and the community, these same inner urges that have caused competitive struggles and wars will find their outlet in the heroic deeds of peace.

What does stand in the way of democracy? It is stupid customs, outgrown traditions, blind ignorance, the belief that man is lazy and that his supreme economic law is to get all he can for as little as he can, whether it be in money or in service. It is our belief in the perversity, unregeneracy, and depravity of human nature that stands in the way of democracy. True, many persons have apparently much more altruism and honor than others; but it is undoubtedly life experiences that have caused the difference. Whether a man be a crook or a man whom money cannot buy, society is probably directly responsible. Only a very small percentage of mankind is so handicapped mentally that it cannot be trained for worthy citizenship. It is not child nature but child nurture—environment—that makes a man a desirable or an undesirable citizen. We have strife, greed, dishonesty, cruel and vicious practices in every organization and institution because the impulses and learning tendencies of the child have been exposed to jungle conditions, practices, tactics,

and philosophy for so long that he accepts them as infallible truths of life and living.

The curse of the age is biased customs, foolish traditions, and blind acceptance of bad conditions as perfectly natural and unavoidable. The hope of the race is in its children. They are not yet slaves of custom. If an ideal is too big for adults, present it to the children. With them, nothing is impossible. In their eagerness for activity and freedom from tradition lies the hope of democracy. In the degree that we shield them from ignorance and the shackles of outgrown customs, in the degree that we encourage them to try out new projects of living and achieving, in the degree that we stimulate them to express their inner urges and boundless energies in the creation of new habits, attitudes, and ways of living, will the spirit of democracy come to reign on earth.

#### HOW CAN DEMOCRACY BE ATTAINED?

Why does a German baby learn to speak German and not English? Is speaking German instinctive or inherited with certain types of human beings? How does the child learn that two fives make ten? In both these instances learning is the result of being exposed to a certain type of environment to which the child reacts. Courtesy, politeness, patience, truthfulness, and thoughtfulness of others—in fact, all virtues are learned in one way only, through living and practicing them until they become habitual forms of behavior.

#### WHAT CAN THE HOME DO TO INCULCATE DEMOCRACY?

The home itself must be a democracy before it can give training in democracy. If a little child is the replica of his environment, then, as is the home, so will be the child. If it is a home of autocracy, autocrats will spring up; if it is a home of anarchy, anarchists will be developed. How ridiculous it is to think that one can train children *for* a democracy, unless they are trained *in* a democracy. The average American home is far too often an example of either an autocracy or an anarchy. When the parents

are nervous, angry, or exasperated, the home is an autocracy of the first order. At such times the child is bossed, cuffed, and herded around as if he had no individuality. He soon learns to be submissive, passive, and inert, until the storm blows over. In a few hours, this same home may be a fine example of an anarchy. Chaos, confusion, disrespect, disregard for the opinions, rights, and property of others is once again the rule. The parents become too busy to straighten out the situation. Many commands are given, few are obeyed. Threats are made but never executed. Scoldings, nagging, and bitter retorts drive the parent and child farther and farther apart. Finally, the cycle is completed; the parents again become infuriated; there is another explosion; and someone is unjustly and violently punished.

But what are some of the marks of democracy in a home? The following conditions are only a few which are evidenced:

1. Love and understanding prevails among all the members of the household.
2. Each one's individuality and personality is respected, from the youngest to the oldest.
3. Each one has many rights and privileges that appeal especially to him.
4. Each one sees that in the enjoying of these rights and privileges he does not infringe upon the rights and privileges of others, who also are living their lives in their way.
5. Each member of the home has many tasks, responsibilities, and duties that must be done at the time they ought to be done.
6. The tasks and responsibilities of each member, from the oldest to the youngest, are definitely specified, preferably in written form.
7. All cases of dispute, neglect of duties and responsibilities, or infringements upon the rights of others are handled by the group as a council. In case the situation calls for immediate decision, one of the older members of the group renders the verdict, which is subject to reversal of judgment when the family as a court reviews the situation.

8. Anyone who sees another failing to live up to his standard sympathetically brings the matter to his attention. If the suggestion is repeatedly ignored and there is no change in conduct, the problem is brought before the whole group for consideration.
9. A code of regulations, which all are to observe, is drawn up and subscribed to. For example, the group may agree that "all clothes are to be hung in the proper places, all books, tools, toys, and playthings are to be put away carefully when not in use. All are to come to meals promptly and on time. Each bedroom is to be open for inspection at any time after breakfast," etc.
10. Each member of the home group has a right to protest against the conduct or decision of another, even the child to protest against a parent's decision or failure to observe the code to which all have subscribed. If parent and child cannot come to an agreement, the child is to obey the parent and then later bring the matter before the group, if he thinks the decision was unjust. Children raised in such an atmosphere, breathing at every breath both by precept and example fair play, square dealing, thoughtfulness and consideration of others, cooperation, justice, sympathy, courtesy, acceptance of responsibility, and loyalty, become in truth the living embodiment of those virtues.
11. All things pertaining to the home, its furnishing, landscaping, decorating, and improving, become a family project. The ideas, tastes, and choices of even the youngest member are considered and evaluated in the presence of the group.
12. Matters of personal and individual taste are to be left, for the most part, in the hands of the individual most concerned, after the group has given advice. For instance, the child's tastes and choices in dress and furnishing and decorating his room should be seriously considered, and the final choice left to him, after due consultation. What if he does make a mistake? Will he himself not make better decisions as a result? How else can he learn to make

accurate judgments and reliable selections, except through practice?

#### ARE DEMOCRACIES IN THE HOME PRACTICABLE?

Probably the best way to allay the doubts of parents as to the advisability of giving the children so much freedom in the home is to present evidence which proves beyond a doubt that the children do accept their responsibilities seriously and enthusiastically, and that there is actual growth in democratic spirit for all those affected. The following paper was prepared by Mrs. Ernest Mitchell of Monett, Missouri, a student in an extension course in character education, given under the auspices of Missouri State University. At the request of the instructor she presented this report of the workings of democracy in her own home as it had been practiced for years.

#### CAN WE HAVE DEMOCRACIES IN OUR HOMES?

One of the crying needs of the day is for men and women who will accept responsibility willingly, someone who can "carry a message to Garcia."

As parents, what part are we taking in educating our children in this acceptance of the responsibilities of life? How and when and where shall this education begin? Some may be pessimistic concerning the outcome and others think the problem will solve itself later as we have left many things to do. But after watching closely the development of two very healthy, normal children, a son twelve and a daughter eleven, and working on this problem in my only laboratory, my own home, I am most optimistic. I am able to report only the revelations that have been made to me, but the manner in which children can and do assume responsibility has often been a revelation.

The real problem has never been how the children would react and respond (I have great faith in them); the big problem, the difficult thing has been for me to set a pattern worthy of copy. Where do our children derive their conceptions? To realize the enormous power of imitation in the development of character makes me, as a mother, wonder about the way I accept my responsibilities. What is my attitude—am I, as a mother, making of my home a distinct educational factor? My first and greatest



responsibility is to my own home and family. Unless I accept this, how can I really teach, really "lead out" a child.

As parents we must very early show children that the success of the home depends upon the contributions each member makes. We all share the joy and we all suffer when one fails to do his part.

Today I have been furnished a good example of what a girl of eleven can do and the spirit of gladness in which it may be done. This morning I arose from the breakfast table and informed Maryruth that it would be necessary for me to be away from home the entire morning. I also stated that it worried me to leave all the work for her to do. There was sweeping to be done, dusting, making beds, washing dishes, and preparing lunch. She, being impulsive, readily and in a firm tone replied, "Now mother, if I know you're worrying I can't work well. You get it off your mind and I'll manage the house." Well, I ceased to let it worry me but I began to do some real thinking. A feeling of thanksgiving and appreciation seized me. We parents take things in such a matter of fact way! Here I had an eleven-year-old daughter to whom I could turn over a big piece of work and forget it! Any housewife or mother knows what a morning's work amounts to. Daughter had done those things before but it struck me forcibly anew how a child of eleven could couple up her self-reliance, executive power, common sense and loyalty and carry a task through to completion. At noon when I returned, what did I find? The house was in perfect order, lunch was ready to be served, and daughter was very calmly looking at a new magazine. Lunch consisted of lamb chops nicely browned, creamed peas, and a good salad. We all enjoyed the meal and *told her so*. She was interested in it—the planning is all left to her. Let me ask, "would it have been a practical example of democracy in the home for me to have left instructions to cook ham for lunch?" She evidently preferred lamb—what about her tastes and preferences? Isn't the home the first place for the children to get the true meaning of true democracy?

The children have their own room; they suggested the time for redecorating and the way it was to be done. They wanted new pictures for their walls and after much discussion and elimination but with no outside suggestions (isn't it hard to stay in the background, adults?) they purchased Baby Stuart, Spring Song, Boy and the Rabbit, and End of the Trail. This is *their* room, their books, their curios, etc., and the appearance of it is their responsibility. How can we give them real lessons in responsi-

bility without giving them the necessary implements with which they can carry on! They must learn by doing.

One day in the early spring I was ill and unable to get up. It would have been an easy matter to arrange for someone to stay with me but after thinking it over I decided to keep Maryruth out of school that day. Probably I deserved the criticism I received, but I wanted to see how she would meet emergencies of that sort. Really, I thought it might be as helpful to her in later years as to be able to enumerate breathlessly the capitals of the New England states. A sick person in the home seems to upset so many people—they just do not know what to do. Their usefulness is nil. I received the very best of attention that day. I could hear her phoning for supplies for the house, attending to the laundry and various matters of household interest. Her father, being an M. D., was rather surprised at her management in the sick room and it pleased her to do it. Children are so willing to do—but they dislike too many instructions from adults forced upon them. And their judgment is pretty sound—they are not hampered or influenced by all the customs we grown-ups are bound to.

It would be misrepresenting things and I should not like to leave the impression that our daughter is unusual in any way. Her domestic tastes are no more pronounced than those of any other girl I have observed. She has been *allowed a free rein* in doing things and I have found many times her methods superior to mine. She swims every day in summer, plays baseball and tennis. Yet she finds time to do her own mending and just now is having a great deal of fun experimenting with the sewing machine. I'm not at all afraid of her damaging that sewing machine. She has been consulted in the selection of her own clothes since she was a very tiny girl, in fact, so tiny that she expressed herself as wanting her dresses and socks to "favor." Very few times have her proposed selections been such that it was necessary to hold a council or debate. (Mothers will understand.)

Just before Maryruth's *tenth* birthday, a certain professor was to be a dinner guest in our home. Maryruth was to plan and prepare the entire dinner with no outside help. She had some difficulty in deciding upon a design for the place cards but as it was tulip-time, she decided upon a tulip design and made the cards herself. (She frequently lifts a meal out of the ordinary by making some attractive place cards.) She saw to it that the *best* table linen was in readiness and the menu took a great deal of thought. She said baked chicken would be quite nice but at

that time chickens were so expensive (she buys carefully and knows what a budget is) she decided upon pork roast with browned potatoes. She had several vegetables, a salad, and dessert. The only help I gave her was to have her excused from school at the afternoon recess so she could get her roast on in time. The meal was served under difficulties, part of the family being away at the dinner hour. Did she make any mistakes? Yes—she afterward told me she could improve upon it next time. Was I embarrassed? Emphatically, No! We parents are too easily embarrassed and I felt that our guest was too interested in the big things of life to dwell upon any little mistake in table service. Her intentions were of the best—she wanted to have an enjoyable meal—what would an unkind criticism have done to her? We discussed it later and I found that she was probably the first to notice the little mistakes such as leaving the silver casserole stand in the kitchen while the baking dish unadorned graced the dining table. (She had shined that silver previously, thinking of how pretty it would appear upon the table.)

One real cold morning last November I was awakened by a noise in the kitchen and upon investigation found my twelve-year-old son making a fire in the kitchen range. He evidently noticed my look of surprise for he came nearer and said, "Mother, I have been thinking that never again as long as I am at home will you or Dad get up to make fires in the morning—*this is my work.*" Knowing full well how growing boys like to sleep and how hesitant they usually are about getting up on cold, wintry mornings, I wondered if he really would do as he said. In fact, I was doubtful. But not once did he fail to do it! Dad and I were called to breakfast every morning. Maryruth thought it her duty to prepare breakfast and did for a few mornings but Rupert wanted her to sleep on and he went so quietly about his work that the whole household slept on until called. He felt so responsible that he would forego spending the night with his grandmother even when we urged him to go.

Do you wonder at my optimism? Our home is *not* different from other homes. We have the joys, the sorrows so common to all. But we are making an effort to *share* and *bear* together those joys and sorrows. We all have a part in them, and I am confident that children are willing and eager to bear their part of the load. They can *very early* catch the vision and will work toward the goal of that ideal home where doing for others is a real labor of love. As we keep before us our indebtedness to the homes of the past we try to keep before us our responsibility to the homes

of the future. And viewing it in this light I have found the children accepting responsibility, *honestly, seriously*, and planning their part in making the home a success just as carefully as an adult. It is for us parents to show them the way.

Comment upon the democracy in that home is unnecessary. Suffice it to say both children and parents are secretly challenging each other to be first in service. The children are encouraged to show their abilities as leaders. They are *praised* in generous measure for their achievements.

### CONCLUSION

1. Democracy is more than a form of government. Its deeper significance is evidenced in a spirit of tolerance, fair play, faith in humanity, unselfishness, and love of service.
2. Democracy can be achieved only when all have unbounding faith in humanity to attain the highest and best. Prejudice, custom, tradition, and ignorance are the most bitter foes of a democratic society.
3. Democracy cannot be achieved by imposing a certain form of government upon society. True democracy will result only when the daily environment of each individual gives him an opportunity to practice the traits characteristic of a democracy.
4. The home is the ideal place for children to get a fundamental concept of a true democracy. If tyranny or anarchy reigns in the home, tyrants and anarchists will be produced. But if, in all matters pertaining to the management and happy functioning of the home, each member is considered, if each has a right to express his opinions and knows that they will be respected, if each is given an opportunity to develop his own personality but, at the same time, is led to realize that he must not infringe upon the rights of others, if each has certain duties and responsibilities depending upon him which, if not properly executed, will make for inefficiency, and if each is an important factor in the administration of home matters, then the child in that

home is truly being prepared for a democracy by living in a democracy.

5. There are many homes in which democratic living is being successfully practiced. The example cited in this chapter is indicative of what may be done when parents and children wholeheartedly, openmindedly, and sympathetically cooperate.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE NEED OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE HOME

The pioneer home was a great educational institution, because it furnished daily many responsibilities and problems. Children and parents actively shared alike in the solution of these problems. Activity and industry were necessary in order to eke out an existence.

#### HOW DOES THE MODERN HOME COMPARE WITH THE PIONEER HOME AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION?

Compare the life of the pioneer girl with the life of the modern girl, regarding home responsibilities. When the pioneer girl returned from school, there were candles to dip, bread to bake, butter to make, and clothes to be manufactured out of such raw materials as wool, flax, and hides. The making of dyes and soap, gardening, raising poultry, gathering and drying fruit, the making of preserves and jams were real life situations many of which had to be met daily. But each stimulated the imagination, the inventive genius, the originality, the initiative, the observing and thinking capacities of the pioneer girl in a most wholesome, active way. What comparable opportunities does the modern home afford its daughter?

Nor was the life of the pioneer boy any less strenuous than that of the pioneer girl. He and his father not only had to provide the food, but they made in their own workshop nearly all the farm implements used, including wagons, plows, threshing implements, and harness. They were architects, carpenters, blacksmiths, and manufacturers. Thus did the life in the pioneer home stimulate intellectual activity.

For when does the individual put forth real mental effort? When is there a strenuous, concentrated focalization of the intellectual abilities? Only when one is face to face with complex

situations that he must and can solve, will he put forth unstinted, intellectual effort. Through activity the mental powers are developed. If any modern youth doubts the efficiency of the mind and hand of the pioneer youth, let him try to make fire by friction; to make soap out of meat scraps and ashes; to make a pair of shoes out of raw hide; or even to make a pair of horseshoes out of scrap iron.

But if these life situations in the days of the Covered Wagon were provocative of intellectual growth, they were no less the occasion for character development. The stern realities of pioneer living could not be escaped. Life on every side presented problems of dire necessity that had to be met, if life were to endure. Modern inventions, modern medicine, and modern charity organizations could not be called upon in an emergency. Turn where he would, the youth in the old days could not escape responsibilities. Largely in the degree that he was able to analyze his problems, call into play the knowledge gained from past experiences, and apply it judiciously to the present circumstances, did he succeed. Otherwise, there was failure, frequently suffering. This strenuous living forced the early development of such traits as self-reliance, originality, patience, perseverance, industry, alertness, accuracy, thoroughness, courage, foresight, thrift, and creative thinking. Is it to be wondered at that girls and boys at sixteen and eighteen years of age became real home-makers of a most reliable type?

#### WHY MUST THE MODERN HOME MAKE RADICAL CHANGES?

Numerous inventions have stripped the modern home of those daily problems, responsibilities, and tasks inherent in the life of the pioneer home. The home life of the modern child is devoid of those tasks conducive to the development of the mental, physical, and spiritual life of the child. We complain that children nowadays are lazy, irresponsible, and indifferent to everything but having a good time. But, if these accusations are true, whose fault is it? Has child nature completely changed in the past hundred years? Does the original nature of the children of

today differ from that of the pioneer child? Child nature has not changed; but conditions in the home are different.

Is it fair to the child of today to rob him of the development which comes from having tasks to do and responsibilities to share? The child has a right to learn to work, a right to feel the thrill of success which comes from achievement, a right to feel that he counts, and that the home could not function effectively without him. The one great crime of the average home of today is that it denies the child a chance to grow up as an industrious, thrifty, self-reliant, courageous, thinking being.

Since the modern home has been robbed of many educational opportunities by the radical changes effected by applied science, the home, in turn, must make radical changes; it must reorganize, if it is to be fair to its children. We must take stock of home life as it is and see what problems, responsibilities, enterprises, and tasks it could be made to offer which would provide a wholesome, stimulating environment for the mental, physical, and spiritual development of the child.

#### WHAT CHANGES MIGHT THE MODERN HOME MAKE?

A little planning and effort on the part of parents would result in a reorganization of the home of today which would give the boys and girls some of the opportunities for character development that pioneer children had. These changes might roughly be classified under two headings: (1) changes in the attitude of members of the home group and (2) corresponding changes in conditions.

**Changes in attitude.** Too many parents fail to appreciate the value of work as a factor in child training. They feel that when they feed, clothe, educate, and provide opportunities for play and recreation, they are doing all that is necessary. But in order to fulfill their obligations they must give their children opportunities to learn to help themselves, to become self-reliant, self-confident, and independent; and this can best be done by teaching the dignity of work and helping them to learn to love to work. Under the caption, "Dangers of Idleness," Judge Ben B.

Lindsey, who gained an international reputation because of his work as judge of the juvenile court in Denver, Colorado, writes as follows:

I firmly believe in work even in childhood. By this I mean the right kind of work. It is not so much a question of work as the amount of work, and the conditions under which that work is performed. This need not lessen our belief in happiness in childhood. I want to say candidly, that there are a great number of children in this country from fourteen years of age upward about whom I feel more alarmed at their failure to do or to know how to do any kind of useful work than of any possibility of their being overworked.

In our zeal for the protection of our boys subjected to extreme or unnatural conditions, we must not lose sight of the dangers and difficulties of idleness. There are thousands of boys in the cities of this country who, if not employed at some useful thing, are generally on the streets or in the alleys, in the downtown public pool rooms and bowling alleys, engaged not always in wholesome play, but too often in idling, cigarette smoking and dirty story telling, with absolutely no thought of work or the serious side of life. They are too constantly occupied with thought of "having a good time" and some rather perverted notions of what a good time is. Too many of our boys especially reach the age of moral and legal responsibility without the slightest conception of work. They are too often more concerned as to how much they earn than how well they do their work. In dealing with a certain class of youth in the juvenile court, I say without hesitation that the most hopeless fellow in the world is the boy who will not work—the boy who has not learned how to work, or the value and importance of work. There is always hope for the boy who works, especially the boy who likes to work.

I believe in the "strenuous life," and I think its importance should be taught our boys and girls at an early age. There are too many young people in this country looking for "the life of ignoble ease." I can say all of this to persons sincerely interested in the protection of the children from degradation or unnatural labor, and yet not be understood as depreciating the importance of wise child labor laws and their rigid enforcement for protection of the children of the Union. But we must be careful, in doing this, never to underestimate the importance of work—the right kind of work, a certain amount of work—in the life of every child, and especially that teaching which inculcates

good impressions in the life of every child as to the necessity and importance of labor. On the other hand, my experience is that most boys will work if given any kind of an encouraging opportunity.

The lack of a chance is often responsible for idleness. At least 90 per cent of our boys and girls are forced out of the grammar school to fight the battles of life. They must have a chance to earn a living under such reasonably favorable conditions as not to destroy all chance of happiness or else they must become idlers and loafers. . . .

I want to see the time come in this country when a boy of fourteen years of age up may be a valuable help to the plumber, the carpenter, or the printer at a decent wage, instead of going to the messenger service and the street. I do not believe that juvenile labor should trespass upon the legitimate occupations of men and women, but we must equip these children for some kind of industrial efficiency and usefulness, or enlarge our reformatories and prisons for their care and maintenance. One of the saddest things in my experience as judge of the juvenile court has been the little fellows who have requested me to send them to the reform school in order that they might learn a trade. The principal of a school once said to me: "Judge, why don't you send that boy to the reform school so that he can learn a trade?" On behalf of the boy, I replied: "In God's name, why don't you people on the Board of Education give him an opportunity to learn a trade at home?"

I ask you, is it fair, just or decent that in most of the cities of this country an American boy has no opportunity to learn a trade, to capacitate himself for joyous, useful work with his hands, unless he commits a crime? And yet, I am compelled to say to you that such is the condition in a very large section of the country.<sup>1</sup>

This statement by Judge Lindsey should not be regarded lightly. His deductions are drawn from his keen observation and deep insight into the lives of thousands of children who were brought into his juvenile court. Daily we see scores of children being neglected by their indulgent or busy parents. The parents are busy and happy, but not the children. Being idle, life to

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<sup>1</sup> Judge Ben B. Lindsey, Excerpt from an address, *The Country Child vs. The City Child* (Proceedings of the Third National Conservation Congress, 1911), pp. 39-40.



them is a bore. They are by nature active in mind and body. They crave action. When a worth-while and legitimate outlet is denied, they often get into mischief, take part in some flagrant escapade, or perhaps commit a crime.

Youth cannot be suppressed. Shall this energy, then, be directed into wholesome channels of cooperative work and gainful labor, or must it seek some questionable excitement for its outlet? The destiny of every child is largely in the hands of his parents. The child's future success and happiness or his failure and consequent misery are largely determined by the way in which he spends his early years. If, as parents, we bring life into the world, are we not bound by the law of justice to see that this life gets its chance for self-realization? The child, as a child, may often prefer idleness; but as an adult he has a right to say, "My life's handicap was my childhood."

**Changes in conditions.** Children are *helped most who are taught to help themselves*. We wish them to have initiative and originality. We want them to be self-reliant and worthy helpers in the game of living. But how can they develop these traits, except through practicing them daily?

Responsibilities, tasks, and problems are plentiful in the modern home, if we but seek them out. These responsibilities differ, of course, from those of pioneer children; but their educative value is none the less direct, gripping, and wholesome. The reader who has a modern home equipped with the latest mechanical and electrical appliances and who also has several servants to take care of the home may smile and wonder where there are any responsibilities for the children. But if such a parent would save his children, let him first dismiss some of the servants and turn over to the children some of the work of the hired workers. Let the children taste the joy of achievement, have the feeling that they really count, have the assurance that they can do things, experience the glow that comes from accepting the responsibilities of a big project, and of relieving their father and mother of worry and anxiety.

What a crime it is to bring up girls who cannot prepare a

meal, decorate a table or a room, make over a dress or a hat, or take over the management of a household on a business-like basis! If girls are to be efficient managers in their own homes, thrifty rather than wasteful in household expenditures, how better can they learn than by beginning as children in the home? Could not the home be managed in such a way that the girls would gradually learn to be responsible for the cleaning and caring for their own rooms, ironing, and cooking?

Could not the boys be held responsible for the appearance of their own rooms, their clothes, the lawn, the garage, and the condition of the cars? Is there any excuse for a child's having so much leisure that he becomes bored to such a degree that he seeks diversion in some perverted form of pleasure? Is it fair to deny any child the joy which comes from achievement? Surely no one would deliberately deny him a right to grow.

#### WILL CHILDREN ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY?

How will children react when they are given an opportunity to share in the responsibilities of running the home? Will they accept the challenge? Will they welcome the opportunity to be useful, or will they feel that these tasks are burdensome and inflicted upon them? The answer depends upon how they have been trained from infancy. If, from the age of two, the child has been encouraged to set his little table, clear it off, help with the dishes; if he has had his own room or corner to keep tidy, bed to make, clothes to hang up; if books, toys, and tools are put away, then taking almost complete charge of the home will later be welcomed.

If, on the other hand, all these little tasks have been done for him in early childhood, as a youth he will not be ready to accept heavy responsibilities. He will have to learn gradually. Joy and pride in achievement will have to be experienced by him; sympathetic explanations, encouragements, and assistance will have to be given, until he learns to appreciate the "dignity of labor" and to get joy in work well done.

If parents want to collect some startling data, let them list

the number of protests or examples of resentment that the child registers in a single day toward those who rob or attempt to rob him of his birthright—the right to become independent and self-reliant. Upon this subject Dorothy Canfield Fisher writes:

As soon as the average normal child emerges from babyhood, say at fourteen or fifteen months, his instinct for self-help emerges as clearly, with as much emphasis, as his instinct for getting his own way. And curiously enough he is usually forced to fight for the one as strenuously as for the other. If you will spend one day in watching a healthy child of eighteen or twenty months, you will come to the conclusion that he is straining every nerve to learn how to "do for himself" and his mother is straining every nerve to prevent him, except in certain ways, now stereotyped. Nowadays, remembering the famous Montessori buttoning-frames, she usually lets her little son try to button his own little coat; but she does not teach him how to turn the water-faucet and hold a cup to satisfy his interminably recurring baby thirst. With cherishing care she springs to serve him a dozen times a day, when almost any child of a year and a half can learn in five minutes how to do it for himself. . . .

The mother painstakingly repeats over and over the word the child is trying to pronounce, and she is not discouraged by the stumbling inaccuracy of his unpracticed little tongue. The fact that he is interested enough to try it is proof positive that he will soon be able to master it. She never dreams of saying: "No, dearest baby, 'kitty' is too hard a word for baby to say. Let mamma say it for him!" The absurdity of that is patent to her. But she does not with equal patience show him over and over how to carry a light stool about and use it to climb up in the armchair he covets. She says: "Does baby want to get into papa's chair? There, mamma lift him in!" And then mamma must lift him out, of course! This furnishes a delightful passage in mamma's life, with a chance at which all of us besotted mothers are only too eager to snatch, of hugging the sweet small body and kissing the round cheeks. It is quite a bother to show him over and over how to climb up on his stool and thereafter to watch over the first experiments, to safeguard the inevitable first upsets. But if she is looking out for the best interests of the small person under her charge, rather than for a good excuse to give him a hug, she will patiently insist upon the use of the stool, whenever it is possible. . . .

The stool, the cup, the stick, the bureau-drawer, the faucet,

what are they but tools devised by human ingenuity; and the use of tools is one of the most important devices for training the young human animal to self-help. Being human he has a profound interest in tools, and is willing, for instance, to bend every energy to learn to use the lever, although he may not know its name for a dozen years. Is he trying to extricate from his sand-pile a buried stone? Don't pull it out with one jerk. Give him a stick, show him how to thrust one end under the stone and put his weight on the other end. You will find him a week later using the principle to force open a door that is difficult to open. Does the baby-girl find her doll-carriage will not go over the threshold? Don't lift it for her. Show her how to bear down on the handle so that the front wheels will be off the ground, and then how to lift and push at the same time. . . .

Any human being, young or old, who has once tasted the pleasure of competent activity, will never lack the instinct to do for himself. *There is no surer beginning for the habit of self-help than the consistent training of the capacity for it.* What people know how to do well, they like to do.<sup>2</sup>

#### HOW CAN CHILDREN BE HELPED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY?

If the taking over of the home is too big a project for the children because of their immaturity, inexperience, or the size of the plant, they can at least assign themselves definite tasks for their share and gradually assume greater responsibilities.

A certain husband and wife are both teaching in a large city system. They have four children, two of whom are in the university, and two in the high school. This entire family of six is busy away from home at least six hours each day. Although they could well afford it, they have no hired help; but each member of the family has specific jobs for which he is responsible. So systematically is everything planned, and so thoroughly does the system work, that even unexpected guests never discern any indication of flurry or anxiety. Meals are well prepared and on time; the house is in perfect order. From the father down to the youngest daughter, responsibilities are allotted.

The training in such a home is unlimited in its reach for future happiness, success, poise, and self-control. Some one has said,

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<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Self-Reliance* (Henry Holt and Company, 1916), pp. 18-24.

"Wise is the one who knows the way to self-improvement"; but happy is the one who notes daily evidences of his self-improvement. Surely such a home life is an education for living, through living.

If responsibilities have not been given the child in early life, it may be a little difficult to get him interested in accepting a just share of the management of the home. In such an instance, the first activities in which he is encouraged to do the planning, executing, and judging should be those that appeal strongly to him. It may be in the making of furniture for his own room, or the varnishing or decorating of old furniture. It may be the selection of pictures, or even the framing of them. After experiencing the joy in taking care of his own room or of his own interests, he can be trusted to try his hands at other and more complicated pieces of work.

Some fathers and sons learn to do much of their own plumbing and repair work about the house. Often they come to know one another and to be real chums through some common, interesting activity. Making of radio sets has been a unifying factor in many homes, and has led to other activities, such as fixing clocks, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and automobiles. Eventually, a simple shop may be established in attic, basement, or garage.

Children should be encouraged to engage in commercial enterprises. The authors have in mind a minister's son who rented a five-acre tract near his home. Here, for four years, he raised and sold Scotch collies, clearing as much as seven hundred dollars a year. Not only has this fourteen-year-old boy become a dog fancier and developed a hobby that gives him much joy, but in the raising and selling of pups he has had many first-hand, worthwhile experiences in planning, managing, and financing an interesting and profitable project. Other children have become profitably interested in raising canaries, pigeons, guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens, gladioluses, strawberries, and garden vegetables for which there is in many places a demand.

If the parents find that the home cannot fully take care of the



problem of supplying the older children with responsible jobs, they could help them secure suitable jobs with reputable business firms amid wholesome surroundings. Thus, during after-school hours and on Saturdays they could be advantageously employed.

### CONCLUSION

1. The application of the principles of modern science has robbed the home of the tasks and responsibilities incident to pioneer life.
2. The life situations of a hundred years ago were replete with opportunities for the development of habits of work. Every member of the home had to accept responsibilities, in order that all might live.
3. Through the solving of problems of dire necessity, the boys and girls early developed such desirable character traits as self-reliance, foresight, dependability, perseverance, and creative thinking.
4. It is not fair to the child in the home today to rob him of the intellectual and character development which results from solving real, life problems.
5. The virtues inherent in suitable work are of infinite worth in the development of wholesome, balanced personalities:
  - (a) Play means much more to the child if it comes after he has done some real work. The most unhappy children are those who, during the long school vacations, have nothing to do but play.
  - (b) Work keeps the child out of mischief. It serves as an outlet for his impulsive urges to activity.
  - (c) Work develops the child physically. It often calls into action muscles that otherwise would not be developed. It does not take the place of play or corrective gymnastics, but is a wholesome, valuable tonic.
  - (d) Teaching a child to be industrious, self-reliant, and persevering is helping him to build habits, attitudes, or dispositions along these lines.
  - (e) Work gives one self-respect, pride, and confidence.

There is no better tonic for childhood's troubles and disappointments.

- (f) The joy that comes from achievement probably surpasses any other pleasure. The child has a right to experience this joy early in life.
  - (g) The overcoming of difficulties and the working out of hard problems challenge the intellectual life of the child. In the solution of his problems he learns to observe accurately, to recall related past learnings and experiences, to weigh and to judge the facts in a case, and finally, in the light of these learnings, experiences, and facts, to make unprejudiced decisions. The skills and techniques developed in the solution of problems are carried over and applied to related activities. For example, the child who learns to make as few unnecessary movements as possible in washing dishes enjoys seeing how he can apply the same principles in drying them or in tidying his room.
  - (h) Work is a great preventive of questionable behavior, perverted experiences, and crime. Children and adults who are wholesomely busy are among the most satisfied and healthy-minded.
  - (i) Through work, the child often discovers his strong aptitudes and abilities. He is thus guided into his life's vocation. Again, work often opens up closely correlated activities which give him further conquests and pleasures.
  - (j) Learning to love to work is the child's heritage. Through wholesome activity alone will he approximate the development of his intellectual and emotional life to its highest potentiality, and thus realize his greatest aim in living.
6. Many of the old-time small jobs are taken care of by organized industry or by mechanical and electrical appliances in the home; yet challenging responsibilities could be found, if the home would but reorganize. It is true that it is

easier for the parents to do the work themselves than to train children to accept gradually the responsibilities. But what is the duty of the home? What right have parents to follow the line of least resistance, when the future of their children is at stake?

7. Girls in the home could early be given an opportunity to share in the everyday routine of cleaning, cooking, and planning. Their duties will be light at first; but, as they develop, new and more difficult responsibilities may be given them.
8. Boys can early learn to keep their own rooms tidy, help care for the furnace, garden, lawn, and car, as well as to help their father with his business. A certain twelve-year-old boy enjoys helping his father (a lawyer) after school and on Saturdays to file his correspondence and business papers.
9. Children gladly accept responsibility, and often they surprise adults by their efficiency. But they must feel that they are co-partners in the work and have a right to share in the planning and managing as well as in the less attractive phases of the job. Many mothers assign such disagreeable tasks as dish washing to eight- and ten-year-old daughters; but they refuse to let them experiment in cooking or baking. Simply allotting tasks to the children is not enough. They must feel that they are a necessary, integral, contributing factor in a successful home organization, and that their ideas, plans, and tastes will receive as much consideration as those of the older members.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE VALUE OF COMRADESHIP WITH CHILDREN

Books have been written upon the companionship that should exist between parents and children. Splendid lectures upon this subject have been given before Mothers' Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lion's clubs. But with what results? Often the parents leave the meeting with an emotional glow for the ideal of greater comradeship, which is forgotten before the day is done, or they think that the lecture was built upon sentiment rather than upon facts. But parents can be genuinely aroused, if specific data representing the desires and wishes of their children are presented. With this belief in mind, the authors, working with the leaders of the Parent-Teachers' Association and the teachers in a small city school system, determined to work out a plan whereby the ideas of the children regarding comradeship with parents might be presented to the fathers and mothers.

**Method of collecting data.** The data presented in the following pages are the results of an investigation carried on in a city of twelve thousand. The leaders of the several divisions of the Parent-Teachers' Association cooperated with the teachers in the grade schools in this investigation. Accordingly, the children in Grades IV to VIII inclusive were asked to write upon three themes in their English or composition periods. The titles of these themes were: (1) What I Wish My Daddy Would Not Do and Say; (2) What My Daddy and I Do Which I Like Very Much; and (3) What I Wish My Daddy Would Say and Do More Often.

The teachers made the following suggestions:

- (a) Please do not sign your name or mention your father's name in any of these themes.
- (b) Please be earnest and tell just what you wish or think,

because no doubt your daddies will be interested in knowing how you feel about certain things, especially if you are in earnest.

Themes were written by 542 children, most of whom writing on all three subjects.

The results of Theme I. "What I Wish My Daddy Would Not Do and Say."

152—Smoke and Chew Tobacco

87—Curse

53—Whip

30—Talk of Moving

25—Scold so Much

20—Fuss and Be Grouchy

19—Tease

18—Use Poor English

17—Make Me Go to Bed and Get Up Early

7—Lose His Temper

6—Be so Cross with Mother

6—Work so Much

5—Make Me Wash Dishes

5—Go with Other Women

Each of the following was mentioned three times: work in the powder mill, work on Sunday, worry so much, make me work.

Each of the following was mentioned twice: travel, talk so much, work away from home, show partiality, talk lodge, drink, be so crazy about radio, sit around and read so much.

Each of the following was mentioned once: be so impatient, go hunting so much alone, be unhappy, think I am a baby, keep bad company, play cards, be so cruel, call me pet names, spend money foolishly, play golf, live in town, be so impolite, stay away from home, correct me so often, attend so many clubs, take me on snake hunts, go away to work all summer, sleep around home so much, refuse to let me have a pet, I hardly know my daddy, would not ignore me on the street, be late for dinner on school days, say he was going to kill himself, go to the doctor with every pain.



WHAT INFERENCES MAY BE DRAWN FROM THE DATA OF  
THIS INVESTIGATION?

The total number of suggestions made by the children was 502. One hundred fifty-two wished that their daddies would not use tobacco. When the data were presented at a big mass meeting, several of the fathers tried to discount the sincerity of the children in condemning the use of tobacco. They declared that the children were only putting down on paper the reflections of the classroom teacher regarding the injury of tobacco to the body. At this juncture several of the children's themes were read verbatim. The following are examples:

"There is one thing I wish my Dad did not do; that is, I wish he would not smoke so much. After every meal almost my Dad will take out his pipe and get the smoking stand beside him. He will then smoke and read for an hour at a time. None of us children can get a word out of him."

"My Dad is the best Dad in town. I do wish he would not smoke and chew tobacco but that does not keep me from loving him. Nearly every night after supper Dad lights his pipe and gets his paper. That means no more games and fun for me. I hate his pipe because it keeps him from playing with us children."

After the reading of several of these children's themes, the fathers were convinced that the children opposed their smoking because it interfered with companionship between parent and child. As the list of children's wishes was presented, the one striking inference that the fathers were compelled to make was that their own children were literally starving for the companionship of their fathers. Ninety per cent of the suggestions manifested a desire for companionship.

The results of Theme II. "What My Daddy and I Do That I Like Very Much."

- 182—Go Hunting, Fishing, and Camping
- 86—Play Ball and Other Games
- 45—Go Swimming
- 44—Go to the Picture Show
- 40—We Work Together

- 29—Go Riding in the Car
- 25—Go to Church and Sunday School
- 17—He Takes an Interest and Helps with My Lessons
- 17—Go to the Country
- 14—He Takes Me with Him Wherever He Goes
- 11—He Takes Me on Hikes
- 10—He Tells Me About His Boyhood Days
- 10—He Reads to Me
- 8—He Takes Me Where He Works
- 6—He Lets Me Drive the Car
- 5—We Take Trips Together
- 5—He Tells Us Stories
- 5—He Comforts Us
- 5—He Boxes with Me
- 5—He Goes Skating and Sliding with Us

Each of the following items was mentioned four times: we listen to the radio; we draw pictures.

Each of the following items was mentioned three times: we play music; read the Bible; work for Mother; dance together; go on picnics; he is so nice to Mother.

Each of the following items was mentioned twice: we are good pals; he keeps his promises; he takes me through factories and shows me the town; I like him for his pocket book; he takes me to town with him.

Each of the following items was mentioned once: he calls me a good child; he is polite to my company; he teases Mother; he is affectionate; he never scolds or quarrels; he sympathizes with me when I get into scrapes; he lets me use his typewriter; he makes rabbit traps for me; he keeps my secrets; I like to get his letters; he helps us plant flowers; he tells riddles.

#### WHAT INFERENCES MAY BE DRAWN FROM THESE DATA?

Of the 617 themes written by the children, 97.2 per cent show appreciation for the companionship of the parent. The child's solicitude for his parent's company, comradeship, and welfare can be noted in nearly every instance. The themes simply glowed with remembered thrills of hikes and fishing and camping

trips which had been experienced with their fathers. Witness the following samples:

"I wish my Daddy would have more time to be with me and help me with my problems. I enjoy so much going camping and fishing with Dad. We have heaps of fun working in the garden together. I don't know what I would do without my Daddy."

"In the springtime, Dad and I begin digging in the garden. We plow the ground and plant radishes and onions. After these are gone we plant tomatoes, beets, and many other good things. We also have a wild flower garden; we go out in the woods and gather many wild flowers; we also have other kinds of flowers, such as roses, poppies, and others. After we get our gardens planted, during the summer, we go on picnics and we go swimming too. When summer is over and it is autumn we go out in the woods and gather pretty leaves. We take our guns along and have a target match. After the leaves have fallen, we take rakes and rake them up, and when it is dark we have a big bonfire. In the winter we go riding on our sleds and skating. My father and I have many good times that I enjoy."

"My Dad and Mother are parted and therefore I don't see my father but once or twice a year. He sends me ten dollars every month. He has just begun to send it to me here lately. He says I am older and need it. He lives in ..... and still he don't come over. I wish he would come to see me more often. I think he would if it wasn't for Mother. He don't want to see her. I get letters from him every week. He always tells me when he is coming, and Mother most always leaves so that my sister and I can have a good visit with him. I wish that he and Mother would go back together so we could have a home of our own. Because children need a father and mother both to love."

Children get lonesome for their parents. Often the parent does not realize this until it is too late. Probably no more truthful and effective picture of what a father means to his child could be drawn than is shown in these simple and natural themes. The facts tell the story. Children at certain ages hunger and yearn for companionship and confidence. Would that it could always be thus! Probably it could, if ——

The results of Theme III. "What I Wish My Daddy Would Say and Do More Often."

- 75—Go to Church
- 71—Go Hunting, Fishing, and Camping
- 60—Let Me Go to Shows and Parties
- 31—Play Games with Me
- 27—Go Driving
- 25—Be Kind
- 22—Stay at Home at Nights
- 18—Take Me to Town with Him
- 16—Move to the Country
- 16—Take Us with Him More Often
- 16—Buy Things for Me
- 16—Take Me Swimming
- 12—Go on Hikes with Me
- 9—Keep His Promises
- 9—Give Me More Money
- 8—Be More Interested in My School Work
- 8—Be Kind to Mother
- 7—Read to Us
- 7—Laugh and Be Jolly
- 6—Let Me Go to Sunday School
- 6—Talk to Us More
- 5—Take a Trip
- 5—Let Me Have a Bicycle
- 4—Bathe and Shave More Often
- 4—Buy More Books
- 4—Let Me Do as I Please
- 4—Let Me Go to Work with Him

Each of the following was mentioned three times: work harder; everything he does is O.K.; be a pal; read the Bible; tell me he loves me; be more patient; let me have a cat or dog; let me drive the car; buy a restaurant; let me ride a horse; buy a car.

Each of the following items was mentioned twice: compliment my work; sing and play; be kind; I wish he was happier; pop corn; help me with my music; teach me outdoor sports for girls; let me join the Y. M. C. A.; do the right thing; be more thoughtful.

Each of the following items was mentioned once: pray; say "yes"; come home oftener; listen to the radio.

### WHAT INFERENCES MAY BE DRAWN FROM THESE DATA?

Here again the data point unmistakably in one direction. It is as if children arose in a body and cried, "Daddy, won't you take time for me?" Note that seventy-five children wish their daddy would go to church with them. The original themes show that they are even lonesome on the way to and from church, as well as in the service. The theme below is a sample of the wishes expressed by the children:

"I wish my Daddy would go to church with me. Mother sings in the choir and I have to sit all alone in a front seat."

### WHY SHOULD PARENTS BE CHUMS WITH THEIR CHILDREN?

The comradeship between father and son, mother and son, father and daughter, or mother and daughter is priceless because of its infinite possibilities for character building. Some significant reasons why parents should cultivate the friendship of their children and be closer companions are:

1. It makes for genuine happiness for both parent and child. Happiness should be one big aim in life, since it makes us more effective in our work, play, and social cooperation.
2. It would keep parents young and happy.
3. The child has a right to know his parents intimately and to feel that they are chums and confidants.
4. It is a parent's obligation to help in the development of right ideals and habits through comradeship.
5. Children learn more by imitation, in their early years, than in any other way. The parent who is in earnest and has the complete confidence of his child can exert a tremendous influence in this formative period of life.
6. Children at certain ages adore their parents, who thus become their models. A never failing consciousness of the truth of this statement will probably help busy parents to give the time they should to their children.
7. But the greatest reason for the comradeship of parents and children is that the confidence, trust, and respect of the



child which can be best gained in this way will probably last. A mutual understanding and sympathy for the weaknesses of one another will strengthen their bond of union and be significant for ultimate outcomes.

Many parents fail to realize, until it is too late, the significance of having the confidence of their children and a "chum" relationship. If this bond is not formed rather early in life, the child turns elsewhere for companionship; and parents live to regret that their adolescent children are almost strangers to them. When it is too late, many a father and mother have tried to cultivate intimacy with their children. When will parents learn to put first things first? What will it profit them to gain the whole world and lose their own child? Many have suffered keenly because of this. It need not have been, if ——

#### HOW MIGHT STUDIES SIMILAR TO THE ONE JUST REPORTED PROVE OF VALUE?

Studies such as the one reported in the preceding pages have great possibilities for good. Some of the more potent possibilities are:

1. When parents and teachers cooperate in putting on such a program, a mutual understanding and sympathy is born in the united interest.
2. The candid suggestions of the children give parents and teachers a greater realization of the importance of comradeship.
3. Such data influence parents to take time out of their busy, crowded lives to know their children, to live with them, and to become their chums.
4. Similar studies might be made in which the children would write similar themes about "Mother." The mothers, as well as the fathers, need to know what children think of them.
5. Teachers and pupils might use such a method for mutual improvement. In one of the schools in this particular city the teachers asked the pupils to list the things they wished their teachers would not do. No names were to be signed.

They were urged to be candid and truthful in their suggestions. Several of the teachers for the first time learned that they had little habits that were annoying and distracting. The following were mentioned: (1) teacher nervously pulling at her beads; (2) taking off and putting on her glasses; (3) using her handkerchief so much; (4) snapping her fingers; (5) screwing up her face on one side; (6) shutting one eye; (7) using the same gesture all the time; (8) saying "Pep up," "Snap into it," "That's awful," "Wake up."

The pupils then asked the teacher to write upon the board, when they were not in the room, the things they said and did that annoyed her. The next morning they came to school early to read the list.

This device, the principal said, completely revolutionized the relationship between those teachers and their pupils. Sympathy and understanding, which might not have been awakened in any other way, was aroused. Both learned from one another. Both set to work constructively to help the other overcome faults.

#### CONCLUSION

1. Comradeship with children is a potent, vital means of influencing them in their choices. The habituating of those virtues listed in a preceding chapter could be greatly facilitated by this companionship.
2. Confidential statements of elementary school children show conclusively that they are virtually starving for the comradeship and confidence of their parents.
3. These reports show that children resent such interests on the part of their father as smoking, reading, belonging to many clubs, and business, because these rob them of his company.
4. While the study reported in this chapter concerns fathers, it is equally true that children long for and need the companionship of their mothers.

5. Parents are often very unhappy because their children, as young men and women, turn elsewhere for counsel. But after a child reaches a certain age, he no longer makes overtures to his parents, if his early advances were ignored. If the bond of fellowship and confidence is to be established, it must be developed by parents sharing in the early joys, sorrows, and problems of the child.
6. If parents want to believe that they have an opportunity to relive their own lives in the lives of their children; if they want to feel that they are potent factors in helping their children to make wholesome, satisfactory adjustments to their numerous perplexing life situations; if they want to feel that they are directing the development of the personalities of their children, they must take time to gain their confidence by working and playing with them.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE EFFECT OF GOOD READING AND GOOD MUSIC UPON GROWTH IN CHARACTER

Any constructive character education program for children must provide opportunity for: (1) the forming of right concepts and ideas as to rightness and wrongness of conduct, truth and falsity of standards; (2) making and practicing daily choices in conduct; and (3) judging and being judged for these choices, all to the end that good choices will be rewarded with satisfaction and wrong choices rewarded with annoyance.

#### WHAT ROLE DOES GOOD READING PLAY IN THIS THREE-STEP PLAN OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

Good reading is one great and economical source of right concepts and ideals which ought to be accessible to every child. It is the child's birthright to know and to experience the dreams, the aspirations, the struggles, and immortal achievements of the race. How better could he be stimulated to emulate the accomplishments of the great than by reading and reliving in imagination their joys and sorrows, their conquests and defeats.

But too much must not be claimed for good reading as a direct character changing force. Children have been known to weep almost hysterically over *Black Beauty*, and yet neglect to feed, water, or treat kindly their own pony. It is not uncommon for boys to be greatly moved by the courageous, noble, faithful, and heroic life depicted in *The Dog of Flanders*, and yet beat cruelly their own pups on the slightest provocation. Until the story of any heroic action is translated into life, into neurone connections, and becomes a part of the moral muscles, as it were, one dare not claim too positively that it is a direct, dynamic maker or modifier of character. It is one of the fine bits of irony in life that there is no necessary connection between the state of mind,

particularly in thought and emotion, produced by a piece of good literature, and *action*. Nature has seen fit to leave an unbridged gap here. Whenever possible, therefore, there should be provided some means of giving expression in action to worthy thoughts, emotions, and ideals that have been awakened through reading. School activities, especially of a literary or social character, should be organized, in part at least, with this end in view.

Failure to provide appropriate means of expressing in action the thoughts, emotions, and ideals of good reading may very easily result, not only in an enervating of character, but in sentimentalism and positive moral deterioration.

The classic example of sheer sentimentalism is that cited by James.

The weeping of the Russian lady over the fictitious personages in the play, while her coachman is freezing to death on his seat outside, is the sort of thing that everywhere happens on a less glaring scale. . . . One becomes filled with emotions which habitually pass without prompting to any deed, and so the inertly sentimental condition is kept up. The remedy would be, never to suffer one's self to have an emotion at a concert without expressing it afterward in *some* active way. Let the expression be the least thing in the world—speaking genially to one's grandmother, or giving up one's seat in a horse-car, if nothing more heroic offers—but let it not fail to take place.<sup>1</sup>

However, good reading exerts its influence upon character in indirect ways. It provides the child with an outlet for his impulses and hence becomes a wholesome interest. It not only holds his interest while he is reading, but it affords choice food for his active imagination in reliving, again and again, in his thought life the gripping experiences portrayed in the story. It affords him much wholesome, interesting material for the gang's education; and it may incite him to plan and carry out certain reforms in his own and in his group life. It may reinforce certain much needed motive drives for right conduct; and it should be used by him as reliable standards of what is right and what is wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> William James, *Psychology* (Henry Holt and Co., 1893), p. 148.



In brief, the value of good reading as a character molding agency is that it becomes another stimulating interest filling the child's time and mind with many interesting pictures and ideals that challenge him to make right choices, in this way causing the undesirable habits to die from disuse. Besides adding to a child's fund of knowledge and creating a desire for further reading, a good book should cultivate in the child an appreciation for the beautiful and inculcate worthy ideals of conduct, which help him make right choices in trying life situations.

#### WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDESIRABLE BOOKS?

Terman and Lima<sup>2</sup> group all undesirable books into two classes: (1) those that are worthless, from both a literary and educational point of view, and (2) those that are directly harmful. In the former class come those cheap editions of "juvenile series" which are made up of impossible adventures and melodramatic and unreal heroism, and which present a distorted notion of life. They are written without regard for style. They hold the child's interest because the ridiculous and impossible exploits of the characters gratify their daydreaming impulse. The resulting wrong attitudes developed through extensive reading of this type of fiction are typified in a case reported by Terman and Lima. This boy had read all of the Alger and Tom Swift books.

His waking hours were almost an unbroken daydream; he had not learned how to swim or row or how to take part in any of the usual outdoor games and sports in which the normal boy delights. At home he never offered any real assistance to his mother or father, but he often expressed a wish to "earn a fortune" for them. He said one day as he was passing by a small lake with his father, "I wish one of those girls would fall in, so I could rescue her and get a Carnegie medal and have my name in the papers. I bet the girl's father would give me a couple of thousand dollars, and I'd buy an airplane, or invent one, and I'd go to Alaska in it and find a gold mine or a diamond mine or something." The mind of this boy was so filled with improbable adventures that all of life had taken on a tinge of unreality. In-

<sup>2</sup> Terman and Lima, *Children's Reading* (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1926).

stead of learning to swim, he read of the daring aquatic feats of others. Instead of trying to earn money, he wished for sudden wealth and found the fulfillment of his wish in the overnight fortunes that fell to the lucky heroes in his books of unreal and improbable happenings.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, the books that exert a direct and positive moral harm are slowly disappearing. These books present robberies, debaucheries, and several other vices in such an interesting, pseudo-defensible way as to blunt the boy's moral discrimination of values. Since adolescence is a time of extreme sensitivity and desire for excitement, bad books may lead directly to covert attempts at crime. While girls may not take a fancy to "hold up" stories, they fall victims to silly, sentimental trash. When these stories are tinged with suggestive sex escapades, no little harm may result. When girls prefer to spend their time reading trivial novels, instead of hiking, swimming, roller skating, playing tennis or ball, it is time that parents and teachers became alarmed.

There are also certain pernicious magazines. Some of these are growing rapidly in popularity. For example, one has 650,000 readers; another has an even greater circulation. Three others have hundreds of thousands of readers.

#### WHY HAVE MANY CHILDREN SO FEW DESIRABLE BOOKS?

Why do parents not provide more splendid books for their children? Probably the item of cost is not the least of the reasons. One can get an interesting and gripping but worthless book of fiction for forty-nine cents at some sale; but a book written by Van Loon, Fabre, John Burroughs, W. H. Hudson, Rudyard Kipling, Howard Pyle, Ernest Thompson Seton, Vernon Kellogg, or Eva March Tappan will probably cost several times that. But one good three-dollar book is worth much more to the child than several of the cheaper type. Should we measure the price of a book by dollars, or by the immediate and ultimate influence it exerts upon the emotional and intellectual life of the child?

Another reason why the adolescent youth does not possess better books is that he gets his reading tastes from other mem-

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.

bers of the family. For example, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, which appeared first in 1925, had its thirteenth printing within six months. Did Van Dyke's *The Other Wise Man*, Robinson's *The Mind in the Making*, or Wells' *Outline of History* experience such sensational sales?<sup>4</sup>

Again, parents, teachers, and Boards of Education often claim that they do not know what books to buy for children of various ages, or where to buy them. But, by a little inquiring, they could learn that good book lists for children of all ages are to be obtained for the asking from up-to-date libraries. Thousands of dollars have been spent in research during the last few years in an attempt to select desirable books upon practically every topic that might appeal to children, from kindergarten to high school age inclusive. For example, *Children's Reading*, by Terman and Lima, lists hundreds of books, giving the author, title, price, name of the publishers, a brief notation of the nature or value of each book, as well as the age of the child to whom it is likely to appeal. The book list is universal in its appeal, ranging from Bible stories to books on aviation and radio.

Another splendid and authoritative piece of work is *A Guide to Literature for Character Training*,<sup>5</sup> by Starbuck and Shuttleworth. Herein one finds hundreds of myths and legends listed under such themes as achievement, adventure, chivalry, danger, duty, home, and work, and also hundreds of myths and legends exemplifying such virtues as obedience, cooperation, service, ingenuity, honor, industry, fidelity, and patience. These stories, with the names of the authors and publishers given, are carefully selected for each grade and ranked as to value.

Since elaborate book lists, scientifically selected, are available for parents, teachers, or Boards of Education, the book list submitted in the appendix is very small. There is no excuse for inserting even this list, except for parents and teachers who may

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<sup>4</sup> Phyllis P. Blanchard, *The Child and Society* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), pp. 183-4.

<sup>5</sup> The Macmillan Company, 1928.

want to make some purchases at once while waiting for elaborate and authoritative graded lists.

Every child should have his own library. By the time he reaches adolescence, he ought to possess and to have read a number of good books. These books should represent his changes and development in reading tastes from early childhood. The cost of such a private library, when distributed over a number of years, is usually not prohibitive. If the money spent for worthless books, useless toys, gum, tobacco, candy, and questionable movies were invested in good books, how much richer in genuine happiness and constructive achievement the child's life might be!

#### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GOOD MUSIC IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

The Fourth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence sets forth the general and specific aims of music instruction as follows:

The general or humanistic aim of music instruction is to contribute to the character of the individual and society an additional measure of the idealism, the joyous preoccupation with unselfish interest, the elevation and purification of feeling, and the psychic health dependent upon abundant but orderly expression of emotion, that come from appreciative contact with, and the endeavor to create or recreate the beautiful in music.

The specific or musical aim is to develop appreciation of the beauty that is in music, as a condition of attaining the general ends described.<sup>6</sup>

Good music, because it gives a *balanced* and complete satisfying outlet to the emotional urges, affects character development. Good music is replete with a richness of rhythm, dynamic shading, melodic risings and fallings, tone color, and harmonies; but these stimulations are arranged in effective balance in such a way that the effect upon the recipient is a balanced, beautiful, and exalted general toning up' of the whole of the feeling and emotional life. Not so with jazz, which by its composition is highly

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<sup>6</sup> "Fourth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence." (Feb., 1926.) Published by *The Department of Superintendence*, Washington, D. C.

unbalanced and is written to arouse certain specific feeling centers only. Such selections are disintegrating in their effect upon the affective life, especially that of adolescents who, because of rapid changes of growth, are experiencing a struggle to maintain poise of personality.

Good music, like good reading material, furnishes an outlet for certain innate impulses. It becomes another wholesome interest, an aesthetic and purifying leisure activity, filling the child's time and providing a stimulus, second to none, for both his intellectual and emotional development. It is now the opinion of experts in the field of music that children should be exposed from infancy to carefully chosen music experiences that are compatible with their aesthetic and intellectual development. Thousands of dollars and months of scientific research have been given to provide such a repertoire of musical experiences for the whole of childhood so that there is no longer any excuse for teachers and parents neglecting this phase of development. In the appendix references giving information regarding musical instruction and appreciation in all its phases for all ages are listed.

### CONCLUSION

1. While too much must not be claimed for good reading as a direct moulder of noble character, yet the following virtues are inherent in good books:
  - (1) They supply right concepts, and right concepts are needed before one can make wise choices.
  - (2) They offer a most wholesome leisure interest and activity. A child who is reading good books is safe for the time being from mischief.
  - (3) They are likely to inculcate worthy ideals of conduct which will help the child make right choices in perplexing life situations.
2. Undesirable books are: (1) Those which depict unreal, impossible and distorted notions of success and happiness and (2) those which suggest robberies, hold-ups, debaucheries, and unwholesome sex escapades.



3. The greatest of care should be used in the selection of books for the child's personal library. Parents should consult reliable, scientific, classified book lists in buying new books.
4. Good music is not to be ignored in the development of character because (1) it affords a satisfying outlet for emotional urges and (2) it gives the child another wholesome interest for his leisure hours.
5. Parents and teachers should see that, beginning early in life, the child has an opportunity to enjoy and express himself through wholesome musical experiences.

## CONCLUSION

### HOW INCLUSIVE SHALL ANY CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM BE?

An effective character education program must touch the life of the child in his every waking moment. How fortunate is that child whose wholesome home and school atmosphere is supplemented by a stimulating, constructive community environment! It is almost futile for any one institution to hope to accomplish much alone. In many respects, one of the biggest jobs of the school is to enlist the hearty support and cooperation of all other community organizations in the great work of rearing honest, happy, progressive, virile, and law-abiding citizens.

In every community, there are several organizations that are only waiting an opportunity to do something tremendously worthwhile. Of course, they have to be "shown." The project for helping the children in some new way must be sold to them, before one can expect heart and purse strings to loosen. But the majority of members of these organizations are parents. Regardless of how selfish or sordid they may seem to have become, few of them are really so self-centered as to disregard an appeal for a happier, cleaner, and better world for their children. Not only can splendid leaders in citizenship enterprises for boys and girls be found among the adults in these organizations, but even in the smallest communities hundreds of dollars can be raised to support the youth movement, after it is launched.

### WHAT ARE SOME COMMUNITY SOCIALIZING ENTERPRISES THAT OUGHT TO BE SPONSORED TWELVE MONTHS EACH YEAR?

**Music.** Good music is one of the socializing enterprises that ought to be functioning in every community as a follow-up to

the music work of the school and home. It ought to be upon a twelve-month basis. For the masses of children the long summer vacations are boresome; frequently they are times of mental and moral deterioration. The child must have an outlet for his urges. If none is provided, he seeks one, and too often the consequences are very undesirable. One of the most desirable avocations a child can have is music. Good music stirs to the depths the finer impulses of the human life, just as vicious jazz appeals to the coarser, primitive impulses. "Teach a boy to blow a horn and he will never blow a bank," has a significance so psychologically sound as not to be smiled at derisively. But instruments, music, and a cultured leader cost money. Are the boys and girls worth it? Who will finance such a project during the summer months for the youth, or during the school year, when school revenues are low?

**Nature clubs.** Probably the organization of nature clubs cannot be surpassed as a means of developing wholesome, clean interests in youth which will carry over into adult life. Communities that have sponsored the study of nature and outdoor living by their young folk regard these hours as the most valuable for the enrichment of life. Immeasurable insight regarding the meaning and purpose of creation is revealed in a study of the stars, rocks, birds, flowers, insect and animal life. A child is touched profoundly when he senses his responsible place in the creation of things.

But, aside from the moral and intellectual possibilities inherent in nature study, there is still another very probable outcome. The child may acquire a hobby for some phase of nature study which he will pursue through life, affording himself and his family hours of happy, interesting, and wholesome recreation. For to anyone who knocks on any door of nature, the whole of infinity comes to answer. Tennyson felt the infinite reach of the encompassing revelation of nature when he said,

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,

Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

**Reading rooms.** Good reading material in the way of books and magazines and a charming librarian who understands the stories loved by children may have a great influence in character education. The power of suggestion in books and stories motivates action. Why not fill the youth's mind with glowing accounts of wholesome adventure and heroism, in the realms of science, industry, invention, art, architecture, music, literature, medicine, as well as in the deeds of our great explorers? The book list for youths given in the Bibliography at the end of this book is only a suggestion of the wealth of interesting, clean, and worth-while reading material available.

No town, however small, should be without its reading room or circulating library. Surely the mothers of the several community clubs could take turns in some sort of daily book exchange. Often some capable high school student can be found who needs to earn some spending money and who will gladly act as librarian. A room in some building or home could be used for the book exchange.

**Playgrounds.** Playground and playground equipment are lacking in many towns. Spencer was wont to say, "Better have playgrounds without schools than schools without playgrounds." Children must have an outlet for their energies. Shall that activity vent itself in the back alley or lumber yard, or in an attractive well-equipped community park or playground?

One eastern city reports that *stealing* and *smashing* windows (previously a pastime for some boys) had almost become a lost art with the advent of public playgrounds. The boys are now so busy stealing bases and smashing out home-runs that they have no time for anything else.

**Community movies.** In some communities the children, under the direction of a committee composed of members of their group and an equal number of interested adults, have provided splendid movie and theatrical entertainment during the vacation

months. Social reformers are united in declaring that some of the worst cases of youthful delinquency brought to their notice are the product of the power of suggestion, through undesirable movies, upon the highly emotional, impulsive, imaginative youth. But there are scores of very fine, wholesome, gripping films that might well take the place of the sensational stuff now so generally presented. It is only a matter of a few years when every wide awake community will keep a careful check on the movies shown there.

**Special church programs.** In a few communities, the church has begun to vitalize its work with young people. In a certain mid-western city, the pastor of one of the churches holds two extra meetings during the week, one for high school girls and boys, and one for parents. In the meeting for the high school students, the psychology of the adolescent is discussed under a series of topics. Twenty minutes or more are devoted to questions and discussion from the floor. These conference groups take up such problems as "petting," smoking, indecent dancing, dressing, meaning of sex, purposes of life and living, consideration for father and mother, etc.

The following evening, in a meeting for the parents, the pastor again discusses the psychology of adolescence from the viewpoint of the parent. Many parents, for the first time, are beginning to understand the emotional and impulsive lives of their children. In other instances, the Sunday school is attempting to emphasize, in its lessons, the same virtues and ideals upon which the school and home are focusing.

**Young people's organizations.** Such organizations as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Cadets, Walton Clubs, and Audubon Clubs, whose aim it is to help young people live more abundantly, should be encouraged, sponsored, and financed by every community.

#### WHO SHOULD FURNISH THE LEADERSHIP AND THE MONEY FOR THESE COMMUNITY MOVEMENTS?

The highest type of *skilled leadership* for all the needed socializing enterprises can almost invariably be found among the mem-



bers of a community. Nearly every community has men and women who are or were at one time proficient in some avocation. They could easily be induced to join in some socializing youth movement, if they felt that the project was worth while, and was respected and sponsored by the community.

America could learn much from European countries in the way of finding leaders within the community. There, in so many instances, noted men and women take up as their avocation some social work for young people. Their service is of incalculable value in directing musical activities or different forms of nature study or sports. Have we any reason to believe that in America we could not do as much? Probably, if the school played the part it should as the agency for social progress in the community, it would find little difficulty in selecting worth-while leaders within its midst. But, if the talent is not forthcoming in the community, the school should *sell the need* of this social service enterprise so well to the different clubs and organizations that funds will be provided. Great material and spiritual resources are available in such organizations as the Rotarians, Lions, Kiwanis, and Cononian clubs.

In a certain small city a committee of boys and girls from the junior high school called upon the superintendent of schools one day to ask that the Board of Education equip the city park (the only play-space in town) with play apparatus, volley ball and baseball grounds, a tennis court, and a wading pool. The superintendent knew that the funds of the Board of Education were depleted. But there was another avenue. He got permission to give these children twelve minutes to present their case at the Kiwanis Club's noon luncheon. The cause of the children was so well presented and their need so keenly felt that the clearing and cleaning of the newly acquired golf links of this club were let out to the superintendent of schools and the children for \$1,200, the proceeds to be spent for playground equipment. Needless to say, they did the work well, the park was equipped, and great pride was taken by the children in keeping everything shipshape.

In another small city system, the three leading lodges and their respective women's organizations are each sponsoring the three

high school classes of the Senior High School. Once each month the lodge either entertains or is entertained by the class that it is sponsoring. The pupils receive guidance, encouragement, and instruction. The members of these lodges take their responsibilities seriously, for the students come to them individually with most of their perplexing problems. The teachers believe that nothing else has ever had such a salutary effect on scholarship and discipline as has this show of adult interest and brotherhood.

In another instance, the Rotary Club in a certain large town sponsors a group of boys supposedly incorrigible. Each member of the club has taken one boy to "daddy" or advise. Once each week, that boy comes to this member's place of business for conference. Each sponsor helps his boy get work, explains to him the possibilities open in certain vocations, often invites him to eat with him, takes him along on excursions; in fact, it is the Spartan method, humanized and modernized.

These three examples are being duplicated every day in towns and cities where adult organizations are helped to realize their potentialities for aiding youth.

To conclude: What this generation of parents and teachers needs is to feel that it is a vital part of the great relay race of an on-going civilization. Shall this generation so run that race as to give the next an overwhelming handicap or a significant lead? The answer depends upon the insight and foresight which we exercise in human relationship. The logic of history makes us predecessors of a succeeding generation. We are at one and the same time both posterity and ancestry. We are not only the children of our fathers, but we are also the fathers of our children. Every generation telescopes at each end into another. If we are standing on the shoulders of those that went before, those that come after will, in turn, stand on our shoulders. We are, therefore, not only building on foundations laid by others, but we ourselves are laying foundations on which others will build. What kind of foundations shall we lay?

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